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MAY 2004

neatoday

The Magazine of the National Education Association

BROWN v. BOARD

Educators reflect on 50 years of progress —and struggle— since the historic ruling

Linda Brown in front of a segregated school, 1954

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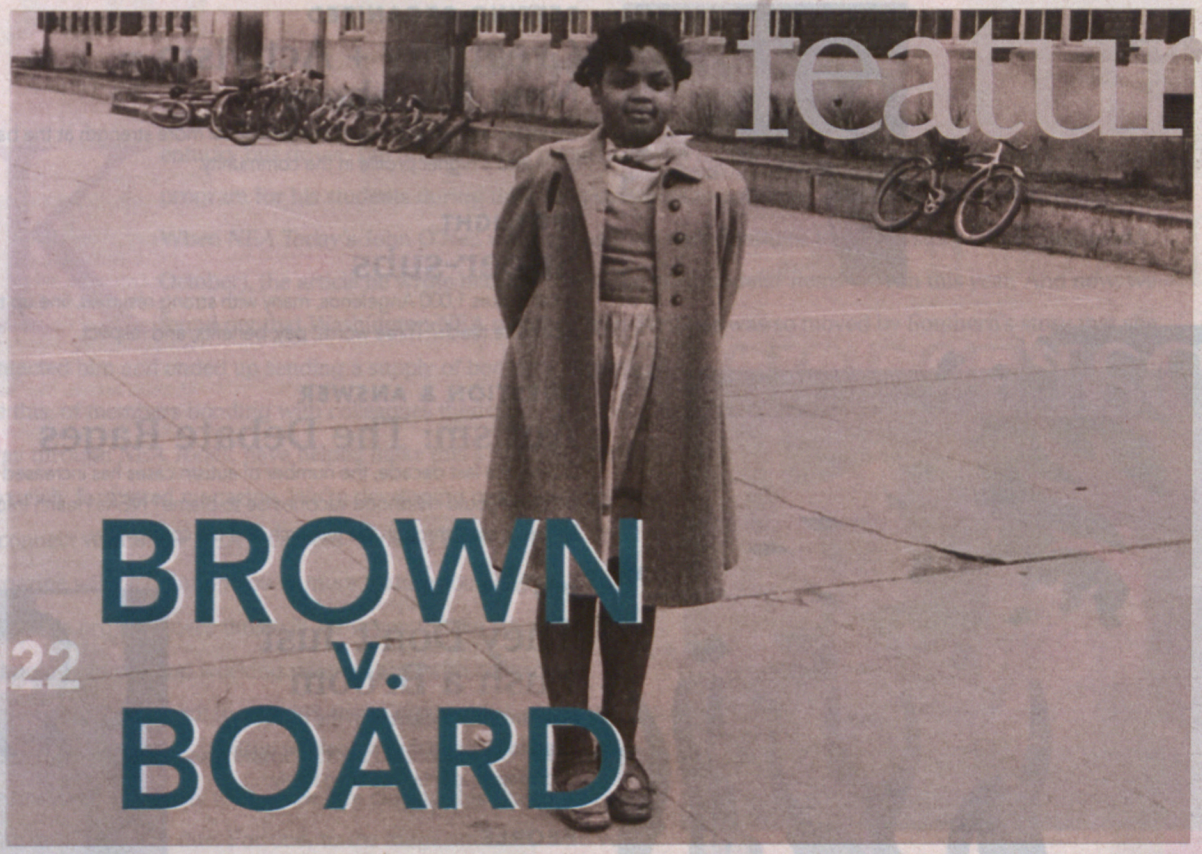
features



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BROWN v. BOARD

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PHOTO TOP: CARL IWASAKI/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; ILLUSTRATION LEFT: SPOTS ILLUSTRATION; PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT: MICHAEL CAMPBELL

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SMALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE FROM TOP: KIM HUGHES, TOM DOWNEY, BUTCH DILL, THOMAS CORDY; ILLUSTRATION: DAN YACCARINO

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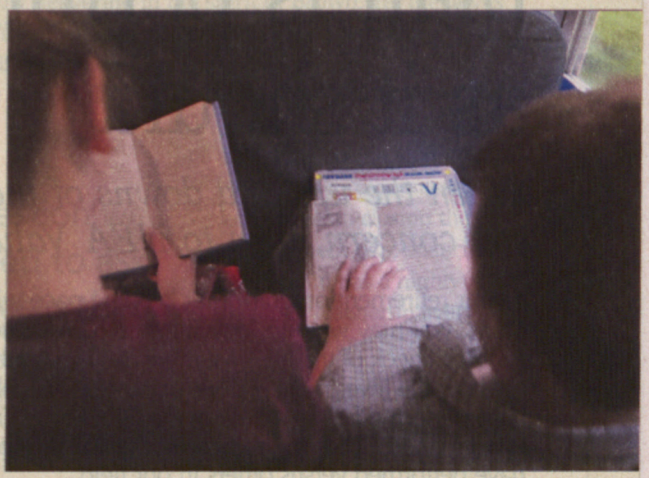
Connections

Kentucky bus driver Tim Southern is a popular guy. In his rural hometown of Louisa, he runs a tutoring program for his students during their long commute to and from school, and the kids love him for it. When *NEA Today*'s John O'Neil went on the road with Southern to tell his story ("Ride and Read," October), the article he wrote became one of the most popular items we ran this year. And now, we found out that Washington NEA member Jean Scribner was so moved by Southern's story that she contacted him and ended up sending a supply of books. ¶ Reports like this, of members bonding with colleagues thousands of miles away through *NEA Today,* have helped make this a fun first year for the newly formatted magazine. We're developing more ways for you to connect with other NEA members. Starting in the fall, the magazine will be pointing you to more features on NEA's Web site (www.nea.org) that over time will allow you to take advantage of technology to develop working relationships with colleagues nationwide. Stay tuned! In addition to seeing the work of our talented print writers and editors, you'll be introduced to the work of our fine Web editors as well. ¶ Before closing this publishing year, some gold stars are due. For one, to the magazine staff, who've braved everything from motion sickness to torn Achilles tendons to Hurricane Isabel to pull together this magazine. Under the leadership of Managing Editor Marilyn Milloy, staff members Michelle Chovan, Sabrina Holcomb, Alain Jehlen, Kristen Loschert, John O'Neil, and Dave Winans have brought home the tales that have brought the mag to life. And kudos to Bill Fischer and the production team of Marsha Blackburn, Christian Lopez, and Alice Trued, who get us to and on the presses. ¶ And gold stars to you for opening up and sharing your stories, the foundation on which all of this is built. As you'll see with the cover story, "50 Years of Progress—and Struggle," your experiences are compelling, your dedication and hope incomparable. We look forward to connecting to you, in print and on the Web, all the more next year.



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Great Public Schools for Every Child

Beginning with *Brown*

This month commemorates 50 years since the Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. This landmark case had a seismic impact upon our society, as it knocked down—with just a few choice words—the walls of legal segregation.

The question we now need to ask ourselves is this: Are we truly resolved to fulfill the promise of *Brown*?

—REG WEAVER

But *Brown* is a beginning, not an end.

The daily injustices in 1954 are inconceivable to our students today: separate water fountains and doors labeled "Whites Only"; amusement parks and movie houses that barred people of color from entering; cemeteries that separated the races, even in death.

We are an unmistakably improved society because *Brown* struck a decisive blow to Jim Crow. Our country began to make strides in education, and African Americans, Latinos, and many other students began showing progress in high school graduation rates while making impressive gains in college enrollment and graduation.

Taking down the "colored only" sign was no small victory, but we cannot undo Jim Crow's 100-year reign of harm and terror in just 50 years. Just as earthquakes do not topple all structures, neither was *Brown* able to topple all barriers to a free, quality, public education for all children and students. Ending legal segregation, difficult as it was, was the beginning of the fight, not the end.

Despite the Court's call, far too many of our schools remain separate and hardly equal. Today, segregated African-American and Latino schools are more likely than segregated white schools to be rundown, overcrowded, and lack basic supplies. And a gap in academic achievement levels persists between many Latino and African-American students and their white counterparts. It's very easy to wonder what, if anything, has changed. And yet, there has been change—deep and profound.

The question we now need to ask ourselves is this: Are we truly resolved to fulfill the promise of *Brown*?

Some in Washington are anxious to rob the cloak of righteousness and wear it as their own. By touting the so-called "No Child Left Behind" law and vouchers in the same breath, they want us to believe that they are somehow delivering in the spirit of *Brown*. Yet the law is full of false promises and vouchers are themselves tools to forestall and prevent desegregation.

We cannot allow a wedge to be placed between our position and the truth. We fully support the laudable goals of improving academic achievement, closing the achievement gap, ensuring every child has a highly qualified teacher in every classroom, and having high expectations and shared accountability.

But the law, as it is currently crafted, doesn't move us any closer to those goals. It's the ultimate education reform hoax!

We know what will close the achievement gap—it's been done. During the mid-1970s and 1980s Latino and African-American children made their highest educational gains. Unfortunately, that trend reversed as desegregation efforts began to be undermined in the late 1980s under the watch of U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist (who as a law clerk had written in favor of *Plessy v. Ferguson*'s "separate but equal" doctrine.)

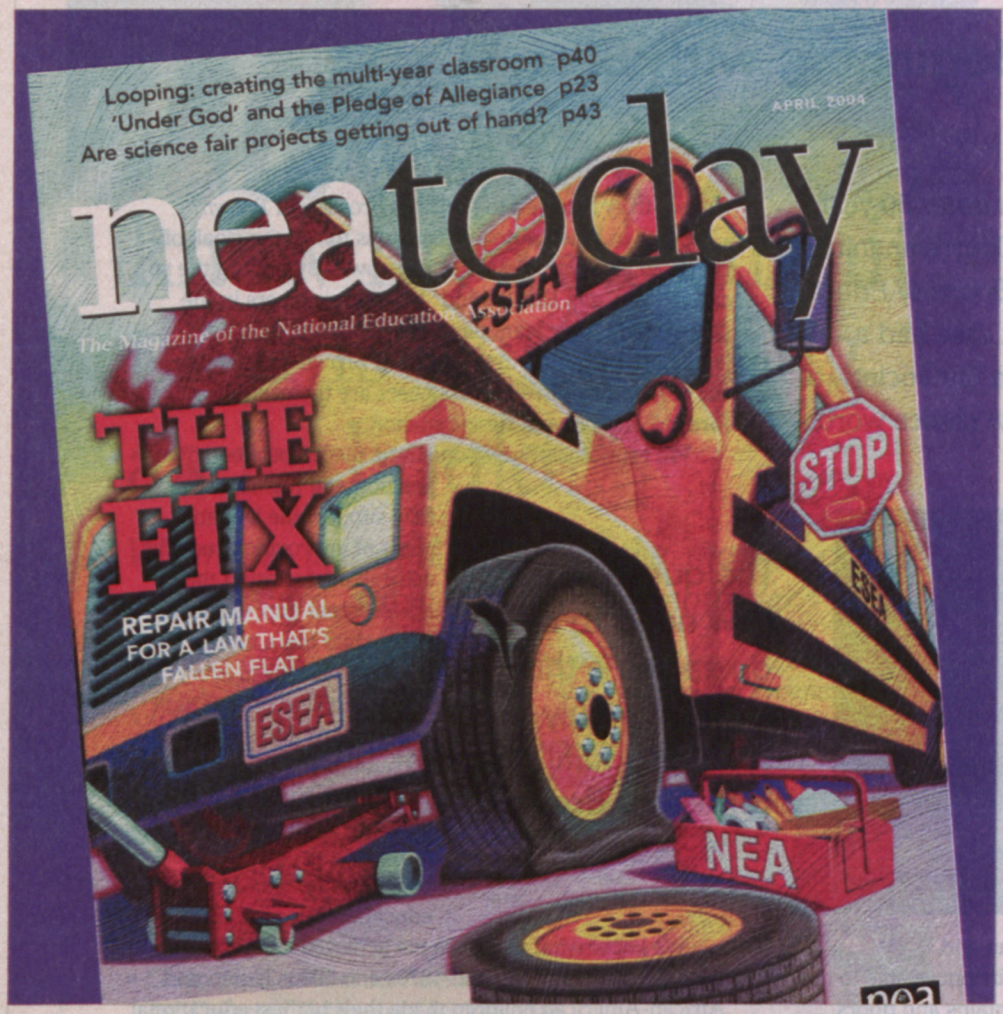
This trend toward retrenchment has consequences. Research shows that the gap between African Americans and whites in college education, employment, and earnings, has persisted, and is growing. I believe that this gap has its roots firmly planted in racial disparities, and the lack of accessibility to adequate and equitable resources in our elementary and secondary schools.

Many believe that the forward march of history compels progress and makes right that which is wrong. That is a mistaken view, for time guarantees nothing but its passing. We can't expect to advance without being involved.

If we are serious about providing every child with what should be his or her birthright—a quality public education—then we must continue to fight for what works: small class sizes, highly qualified teachers and education support professionals, up-to-date books and materials, parental involvement, and yes, adequate and equitable funding. Only then will we have Great Public Schools For Every Child—schools worthy of *Brown*'s promise.

NEA PRESIDENT REG WEAVER

PHOTO: SANDY SCHAEFFER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THE FIX
REPAIR MANUAL FOR A LAW THAT'S FALLEN FLAT
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THE APRIL COVER ARTWORK is dramatic, clever, and loaded with symbols and messages: The first message is, there's a problem with the bus and it isn't going to get us where we want to go until it's fixed. But the second message is, the problem can be fixed and the bus is basically good for education. My preference would have been a junkyard tow truck hooking on and hauling the whole contraption to the scrap heap.

BILL HARSHBARGER
Mattoon, Illinois

MANY ARE BECOMING increasingly aware that the Bush-Paige law "No Child Left Behind" will, in fact, leave many children behind and has placed public schools on the road to disaster.

To work toward leaving "No Child Behind," we must reduce the amount of time spent on "studying for the tests," and the consequences of these tests.

The government needs to provide the funds for tutors, support services, updating materials, modernizing buildings, and technology to do what schools should do: prepare students for their future.

ROBERT RUBINSTEIN
Eugene, Oregon

Lemon Law

Thank you for your comprehensive "repair manual" on NCLB (cover story, April). As with many well-intentioned efforts to correct a "simple" problem, the Bush Administration and many in Congress forgot that "for every problem there is a simple and easy solution—simple and easy and wrong."

Branding some of our best teachers not "highly qualified" is *wrong*.

Piling still more high-stakes testing on kids is *wrong*.

Virtually unattainable attendance standards are *wrong*.

Canceling art and music in favor of test drill is not only *wrong*, but also self-defeating of the proclaimed goal of a "world class education for every child."

The litany of problems created for paraeducators, overcrowded schools, special education classes—the list goes on and on—could have been avoided. NEA members would welcome a modern vehicle to keep education moving. Instead, we got a contraption designed by a committee and not enough fuel to make it run in any case!

Your repair manual will help us get this NCLB jalopy back on the road, but perhaps what we really need to do is to redesign this thing paying attention to the real world. If there were a "Lemon Law" for legislation, this one would surely be recalled!

JAMES POLITIS
Gaithersburg, Maryland

PEOPLE FIRST, PLEASE

I WAS DISAPPOINTED to read in the April cover story the term "schizophrenic girl" used in discussing the work of a special education teacher.

IDEA encourages "people first language" such as "a girl with schizophrenia" to prevent society from focusing on the disabilities rather than the abilities of those with special needs. Decency and professionalism mandate the same thing. The spirit of the article was positive, but when we do not think before we speak, we are no longer credible.

DEENA ROSE
Clarksville, Tennessee

'...UNDER GOD...'

THANK YOU for your strong support of the Pledge of Allegiance as it is now worded (April, Rights Watch). If we alter the pledge, are we also going to do away with the Declaration of Independence, or the national anthem or

motto? Where would it end? I think it is wise to honor our heritage.

TONY MANETTI
Keizer, Oregon

I AM AN ATHEIST. I am a teacher. Only now, in my 37th year as an English teacher—my last, so I no longer need to fear the loss of my career—have I dared to admit my atheism.

I did not reach my disbelief lightly; I have spent a lifetime of reading, studying, observing, thinking. My shelves sag with books on world religion, and I have learned that humans create gods. Those who think otherwise have faith. I do not have that faith, and because of it, am a member of the last minority that it is OK to scorn. Among those who scorn me is now the NEA, an organization of which I am a lifetime member.

CAREEN JENNINGS
Lebanon, Connecticut

ourselves rather than learn to accept the multiple shapes and sizes we come in?

KELLY SWANDER
Sandusky, Ohio

WHO'S 'LOW-PERFORMING'?

THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND act is political jargon (President's Viewpoint, March). Does Washington think that before they came up with this act, we were saying, "Let's leave them behind?" We work hard. But children in my school come to kindergarten not knowing one letter of the ABCs. Some have never sat down with a book. I have a friend who taught with me in a low-performing school and couldn't get results. Now, she is at a very good school and gets excellent results. Did her teaching change? *No! The kids did!*

We need to focus on getting these children better home lives.

CHERIE LANG
Vista Santa Rosa, California

supplies are always an issue. Such inadequate tax breaks help keep our profession at the bottom rung for consideration by educated professionals.

ABEBA SALTER
Tampa, Florida

DEFEND PUBLIC EDUCATION

I AM PRESIDENT of the Park Ridge Education Association. This fall, we were forced to go on strike. Our Board of Education is sitting on a surplus equal to 20 percent of their budget, yet they claimed they did not have enough for a fair salary increase or to provide relief for our escalating health insurance costs.

After four days on the picket lines, we returned to our classrooms with both raises and health insurance relief.

As we were returning to work, I read that the IRS was auditing our NEA. It is clear that our opposition to the anti-public education agenda of the right wing and our criticism of the No Child Left Behind act are making us a target of the Bush Administration.

Our Association reimburses its president's union dues, but this year, I plan to endorse my check over to the Fund for Children and Public Education. We must beat back these attacks on public education and educators.

FRED KLONSKY
Park Ridge, Illinois

If we alter the pledge, are we also going to do away with the Declaration of Independence, or the national anthem or motto? —TONY MANETTI

ISOLATION

I WAS INCREDIBLY RELIEVED to read that "many beginning educators feel isolated in their schools" (UpFront, April). I was beginning to think I was the only one. It is a shame professionals dedicated to helping others reach their full potential often do not extend this belief to colleagues. Seasoned educators should assist their newer colleagues. We don't think we know it all, and we do have much to learn!

TRACY MERCIER
Ellington, Connecticut

NO MORE KID GLOVES

IN THE MARCH DEBATE ON suspension, a teacher in Hawaii discusses suspension options for those who bring guns and drugs to school—or who threaten a life—yet all of these offenses are criminal. Do you want your child in a school where a gun-toting kid can return after three months? Do you want drug users at your child's school? We need to stop handling students with kid gloves when they make poor adult decisions. Turn them over to the authorities.

LARRY HELTON JR.
Dayton, Ohio

NEATO

MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER recently had some friends over. They were impressed that she had such cool parents—after all, they had a magazine called NEATO-Day on the coffee table.

BEV MCNEILLY
Alturas, California

FAT CAN BE BEAUTIFUL

NOW I HAVE SEEN IT ALL. The magazine of the National Education Association has jumped on the bandwagon in assuming that everyone is on a weight-loss program, or needs to be, and feels it's their duty to offer support (Health and Fitness, April). I am appalled that my union dues are going toward glorifying weight loss.

Fat can be beautiful, and fit, and happy. What kind of role models are we if we are always trying to change

SUPPLY-SIDE TAX CODE

I WAS AMAZED AND sickened when I did my taxes online this year. When I got to out-of-pocket expenses and found that only $250 were allowed, I thought there was a bug in the computer program. So I frantically backed out to the first step and tried again, only to learn that Uncle Sam is under the impression that I only spend $250. For me as a new high school teacher,

LET'S TALK

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Letters are edited for length and clarity.

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When Bigger Is Better

Boosting NEA membership means added clout—from the bargaining table to the halls of Congress.

Darlene Stinson, a second-grade teacher and building rep at North Myrtle Beach (South Carolina) Elementary, knows an organizing opportunity when she sees one. So when the ramifications of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the so-called No Child Left Behind law, began to hit her district, she went to work signing up concerned teachers and education support professionals.

"A lot of kindergarten assistants and special education assistants were worried" about new ESEA provisions for paraeducators that require new levels of training and preparation, says Stinson. "We had tons of information to give them," she says, including study guides to prepare them to meet the new standards. "When I signed up one person to be a member, they'd share that information with another, and they'd say, 'I need to sign up, too.'" Altogether, Stinson recruited 40 new members last year, making her one of the South Carolina Education Association's top recruiters in 2003.

Stinson's successful organizing is well-timed. Membership in the South Carolina Education Association (SCEA) had dipped in recent years, and the organization lacked visibility in school buildings and also in the state legislature, says Peggy Potter, manager of membership and organizing and UniServ manager for the SCEA.

That's changing—with help from a solid cadre of UniServ staff and involved, energetic members like Stinson. "We've recruited 1,700 members already this year," says Potter, and the SCEA has raised its retention rate for new members from 57 to 84 percent.

Those numbers drew kudos from NEA President Reg Weaver, who spoke at a membership workshop held at the SCEA's headquarters in March.

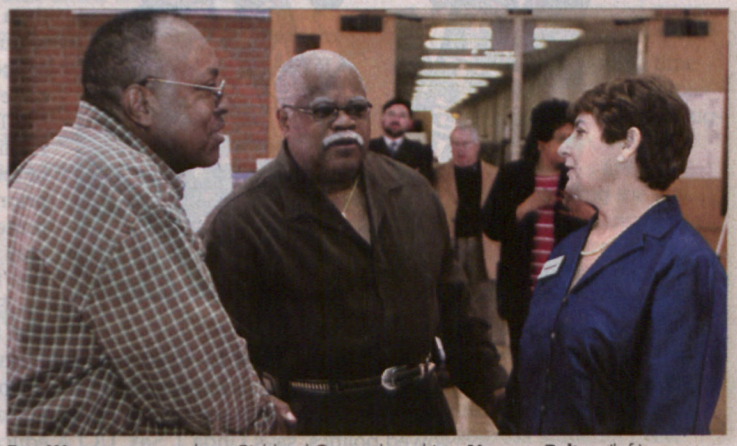
"Our top three priorities must be membership, membership, and membership," he told 145 local Association members, who came in small teams to share organizing strategies. "We cannot advocate effectively in the halls of Congress or in State Houses without membership. We cannot bargain without membership. Membership makes the difference!"

The organizing strategies being used successfully in South Carolina are no secret:

SET TANGIBLE GOALS. Last year, the SCEA set a goal of 1,250 new members signed up during the summer months. They got 1,300. This year, they're shooting for at least 1,775. Each local at the SCEA's recent workshop set their own goals, which will be tracked. After setting goals, "we take the numbers and break them down—how many we're going to recruit each season, each month, or each week," says Potter. "If you have a definite goal, you're much more likely to reach it."

START EARLY AND ASK EVERYONE. Try to get at least four or more members to staff a recruitment table at any new staff orientations, says Potter, and make sure to ask everyone about becoming a member. "I get a list of all the new teachers before school begins and spend that first week [prior to the first day of classes] getting to know them," says Stinson. She answers questions they have about membership—and signs up as many as she can before school starts. She's also persistent. "There's one teacher I've asked every year for 10 years, and I'm still hoping, because I feel everyone should be a member."

FOCUS ON RESULTS. Nothing makes a better pitch than proof that membership brings results. Norman Belton, a bus driver and member of the Richland County Education Association, points out the increased respect ESPs have now that they've gained numbers—as well as tangible pocketbook issues. "Before, if an error was made on our paychecks, they told us they'd straighten it out but we had to wait two weeks," says Belton. "Now, they'll cut a check for us in one or two days." The message must be paying off—Belton signed up 45 new members last year.



Reg Weaver congratulates Richland County bus driver **Norman Belton** (left), the SCEA's top recruiter last year, and state President **Jan McCarthy.**

STAY IN TOUCH. "Our local meets regularly with the superintendent to talk about concerns and questions our members have, so I make sure to send an e-mail to the whole staff every few weeks to let them know what we're doing," says Stinson. "You need to regularly remind people who you are and what you can do for them."

Weaver told those at the SCEA workshop that NEA aims to boost its numbers—and its activism—as part of the Association's Great Public Schools for Every Child Action Plan. A vital piece of NEA's plan, which ultimately will benefit members and schoolchildren alike, is building support for pro-public education candidates in this fall's elections.

"You don't want to see what another four years will do with an anti-public education Administration and Congress," said Weaver, citing recent Administration efforts supporting vouchers and cutting funds to valuable school programs. "We can't allow that to happen."

—JOHN O'NEIL

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER BERRY

upfront

Trends
Facts
Innovators
Wisdom
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First 5
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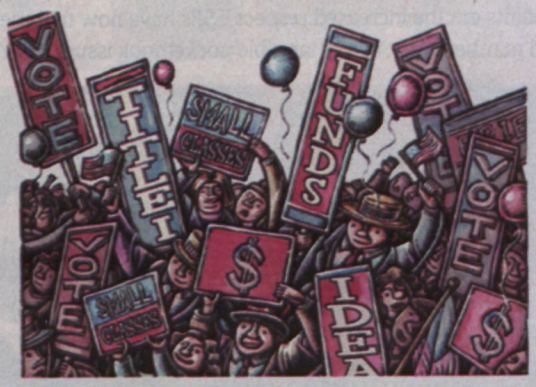
Quotes
Humor

It's All Political

If you still don't believe what happens on Capitol Hill impacts your classroom, then look in your school's wallet. You'll discover the dollars dwindling for programs such as Title I, Head Start, and IDEA, not to mention the perennially underfunded Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the so-called No Child Left Behind law. All the more reason to keep an eye on Washington. And with the presidential election only months away, the time has never been more critical.



FORTUNATELY, EDUCATORS AREN'T THE ONLY ONES who need—and want—to make sure politicians keep their campaign promises. More than 90 percent of parents say education issues influence their decision to support a political candidate, according to the National PTA. And school funding tops their list of concerns—85 percent of moms and dads believe the federal government needs to ante up for public education.

The findings were echoed in another new survey by the nonpartisan Public Education Network and *Education Week*, which found a majority of the public vowing to vote for candidates who make education a top priority—and 80 percent saying they favor a presidential candidate who'd protect the federal budget from education cuts. Fueling some of the fire may be the growing disenchantment with ESEA. In the last year, the survey found, opposition to the law increased from 8 to 28 percent of voters.

Even students are beginning to take notice—and not just of education issues.

More than half of 15- to 26-year-olds think it's important to pay attention to government and politics, while two-thirds believe it's important to vote, according to a recent survey. Still, their interest remains relatively low compared with levels seen during the politically charged 1960s, when nearly two-thirds of college freshmen followed politics, says Linda J. Sax, UCLA education professor and director of an annual survey of college freshmen. But, that's likely just a sign of the times, she says. Back then, students generally believed their efforts would bring about change, says Sax, while today's students often encounter more cynicism when it comes to politics.

They can turn to educators for inspiration, however. Show them how to flex political muscle—and get results. Visit www.nea.org/lac to contact your congressional reps and urge them to support NEA-backed legislation to fix and fund ESEA. And in November, don't forget to vote.

Empty Pockets

It's not just a myth. Schools with lots of poor and minority kids really *do* get less money.

During the 2000–01 school year, the poorest school districts in 22 states received as much as $2,384 less in per-student funding from state and local sources. Meanwhile, districts with the highest percentage of minority students received as much as $2,073 less per student in 28 states.

"In too many states, we see yet again that the very students who need the most, get the least," says Kevin Carey, a school funding expert with Education Trust, a nonprofit education group dedicated to helping poor and minority children succeed.

Some states have tried to close the funding gap. New Jersey, notably, shifted from providing poor schools with $587 less per pupil in 1997 to providing $398 *more* per student in 2001.

By contrast, in Arizona the gap grew by $848 per pupil during the same period. That translates into a loss of about $36,225 a year to a high-poverty classroom.

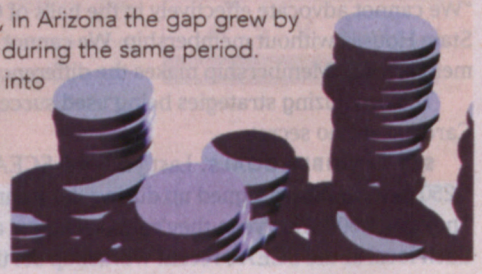


ILLUSTRATION TOP: SPOTS ILLUSTRATION; BOTTOM: ROZ WOODWARD

4 Ways To Cope with Year-end Madness

The countdown has begun! With just two months (or less) until the last day of school, you—and your students—are probably itching for summer. So as visions of beach balls bounce in your head, try these tips to survive the home stretch.

1. **HANG WITH NATURE.** **Warmer weather and longer days are the perfect excuse to have class outside. So take your ecology lesson to a nearby pond or let your art students paint the local landscape. The sunshine will do everyone some good.**
2. **KEEP 'EM BUSY.** **Have your students create a memory book documenting the school year or write letters to next year's class. Interesting and creative activities will keep them focused and help them burn some of that extra wiggly energy.**
3. **PARTY HARD.** **You've survived another year, why not celebrate? Treat your students to an end-of-the-year sundae party (with goodies supplied by your PTA) or a special awards ceremony. You've all earned it.**
4. **THINK CALMING THOUGHTS.** **When all else fails, remember—summer is only a few weeks away and soon you'll have three months to yourself (well, maybe).**

28

[Number of states that have OUTLAWED CORPORAL PUNISHMENT in schools.

Seal of Approval

So what will it take to truly leave no child behind? Providing students with National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) may be part of the answer.

A NEW STUDY from the University of Washington and the Urban Institute finds that National Board Certification (NBC)—a voluntary advanced credential process—successfully identifies more effective teachers.

An analysis of three years of student test scores showed that students taught by NBCTs improved an average of 7 percent more on their year-end math and reading tests than students whose teachers did not attain the certification. Younger and low-income students saw even greater gains, improving by as much as 15 percent compared with their peers. The research did not show that the NBC process itself makes teachers better. But anecdotal information from Board candidates shows the process does affect their teaching.

"Thousands of people have said the process was transformative," says Susan Carmon in NEA's Teacher Quality Department. "Having a credential that distinguishes people who meet this high standard is important. But more important is the value of the process and what people tell us about how it's changed them."

Notepad

Rigid Rule Revised

Thanks to NEA's efforts, the U.S. Department of Education once again has seen the error of its ways. The Department has revised a rule under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that required schools to test at least 95 percent of their students in each subgroup and the overall student body in math and reading. Schools that missed the participation rate—even by a single student—failed to make adequate yearly progress. Now schools may average student data over a three-year period to meet the participation rate—a provision NEA recommended more than a year ago.

This is the fourth time the Department has implemented ESEA changes suggested by NEA. And yet, "these changes are still merely tweaking the law, while leaving many of the fundamental problems unresolved," says NEA President Reg Weaver. The law still expects all schools to meet the same standard in the same time frame, without recognizing the progress students make along the way.

The chief state school officers from 14 states have urged the Department to implement a more flexible "growth model" that acknowledges such improvements to determine which schools make adequate yearly progress, a model that NEA supports.

Have a good tip?

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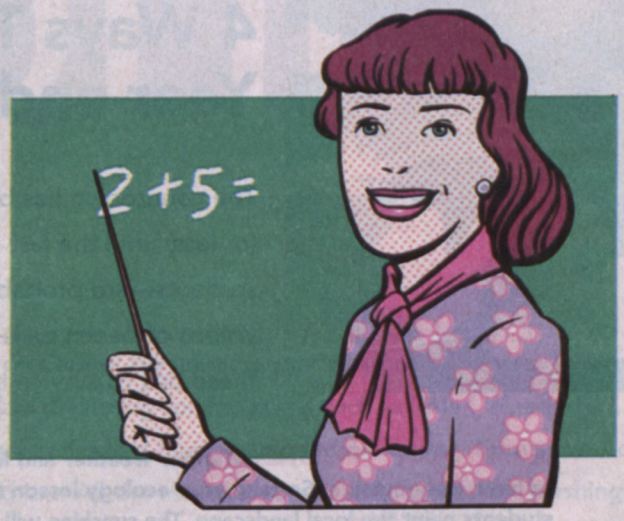
Security Threat?



EARLIER THIS YEAR, President Bush's Secretary of Education carelessly labeled NEA a "terrorist organization." Now, his Secretary of Defense is treating an NEA affiliate—and its hard-won rights—as a national menace.

In a recent meeting with the Federal Education Association (FEA), which represents more than 9,000 educators in Department of Defense (DoD) dependent schools and other labor organizations, DoD officials announced plans to eliminate the bargaining rights of the Department's civilian employees. If FEA and other unions don't agree with the DoD's "bargaining" proposals, management will be free to impose them unilaterally, upon official notification to the unions.

BUT THE ASSAULTS DON'T STOP THERE. The DoD also plans to abolish the impartial bodies that settle federal labor disputes and replace them with a new Defense Labor Relations Board consisting mostly of Pentagon-controlled appointees. The Department also will have the power to scrap any existing negotiated agreements that "interfere" with new personnel policies or regulations and to reduce the right of unions to represent employees at disciplinary meetings.

NEA President Reg Weaver and FEA President Sheridan Pearce have urged Congress to call a hearing on the DoD's personnel plans. "By using 'national security' as a rationale for abrogating the rights of thousands of teachers," they write, "DoD officials have made it clear that unionized educators pose a threat to our nation."

To find out how you can help DoD teachers and ESPs preserve their rights, go to www.feaonline.org.

Lockdown on Lockers

For most students, a school locker is more than just a place to stow their books. It's a haven of self-expression, complete with photos of friends and pop idols, the ever-essential hair brush or backpack, and the occasional pair of smelly gym socks.

But at many schools, these steel sanctuaries sit empty, collecting dust, as administrators look for ways to reduce potential threats to school safety.

Jacksonville Middle School in Texas, for instance, hasn't used lockers in years, even though the school has them. NEA member Kathy McCown, who teaches history at the school, says there were just too many problems with weapons on campus. Desert Vista High School in Phoenix, Arizona, meanwhile, never planned on having lockers. Instead, students receive an extra set of books to keep at home, eliminating much of the need for on-campus storage.

Among schools that do use lockers, many have opted for locker "islands" with shorter lockers in common areas instead of corridor lockers spread throughout the building for easier supervision, says Michael Hantel, an architect with an Illinois-based firm that specializes in K–12 buildings. At the same time, schools have beefed up their locker-use policies to maintain safe, weapons-free environments. A school safety report from the school of education at the University of North Carolina Greensboro recommends that schools inform students that lockers are district property borrowed for personal convenience. And they can—and will be—searched if reasonable suspicion arises.

All the more reason to make sure those sweaty gym clothes make it home.

—CHRIS KOTTERMAN

ILLUSTRATION TOP: PAUL GILLIGAN; PHOTO BOTTOM: SW PRODUCTIONS

Small School Solution

Small schools can be great at keeping students from falling through the cracks. But teachers at these schools often handle several subjects. And many run afoul of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, even though the law's new name, "No Child Left Behind," has long been their mantra.

UNDER THE LAW secondary school teachers must have a college or graduate degree in every subject they teach, pass a stringent assessment of content knowledge, or meet a state standard of "competency" in each field, which some states haven't finalized yet. That put teachers like Alyson Mike, Montana's 2003 Teacher of the Year, in a bind. Her bachelor's degree covers her for her biology classes, but not the physics and chemistry classes she also teaches.

After intense pressure from educators and state legislatures, the U.S. Department of Education reversed an earlier ruling and decided that if a state has a "broad-based" science certification that allows a teacher to teach multiple sciences, the feds will take the state's word for it. The Department is also allowing states to have a streamlined process called "HOUSSE" (High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation) for teachers of multiple subjects. HOUSSE lets experienced teachers demonstrate that they are "competent" to teach a subject if they have neither an academic major nor have passed a subject matter test. Teachers in rural and isolated areas will get more time to become "highly qualified" as well.

The new rule, however, won't help social studies teachers, who often teach history, geography, and government in small schools.

16 Number of bills in the U.S. House and Senate to fix and fund ESEA.

Add your voice with a voluntary contribution to the **NEA FUND FOR CHILDREN AND PUBLIC EDUCATION.** Visit www.neafund.org.

Not-So-Sweet Dreams

You probably didn't get enough sleep last night.

And, most likely, your students didn't either. More than half of all first through fifth graders get fewer than the 10 to 11 hours of sleep recommended for their age group, according to the National Sleep Foundation. Too much TV and caffeine could be partly to blame. Children who drink at least one caffeinated beverage a day miss out on three and a half hours of sleep a week compared with their caffeine-free friends. Those who have televisions in their bedrooms—43 percent of school-age children—lose more than two hours of sleep a week.

But kids aren't the only ones missing out on those precious z's. Parents and caregivers are paying the price for their sleepy little ones, averaging just 6.8 hours of sleep per night, slightly less than the seven hours per night most adults get. So go take a nap.

Global Takes

Where the Boys Are

The United States isn't the only country looking for a few good men. China and Australia both report problems finding and keeping male teachers, especially for small children. Gender stereotypes, low salaries, and the status of teaching compared to other professions often get in the way. In one major Chinese city, for instance, only 14 of the 28,422 kindergarten teachers are men. Meanwhile, the Australian government plans to change its sex discrimination laws to allow male-only scholarships for would-be teachers with the hope that male teachers will help boys learn better, reports *The Australian*. Currently, only one in five primary school teachers down under is a man, which the government thinks is one reason boys don't perform as well as girls.

Put to the Test

Surveys suggest one-third of British 15-year-olds have smoked marijuana, according to the London-based newspaper *The Observer*. So the British government has announced that school headmasters (principals) will soon have authority to conduct random drug tests on their students. Headmasters would first have to get permission either from the students themselves or from their parents, though. Those testing positive would receive treatment and not face expulsion, a government spokesperson added.

Got something to say?

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ILLUSTRATION TOP: STEPHANIE CARTER; BOTTOM: DENNIS M. OCHSNER

A Girl's Place?

MORE THAN 30 YEARS after Title IX prohibited gender discrimination in school sports, girls still are struggling for a place on the field. In Boston, for instance, 36 percent of high school girls played on one or more sports teams in 2001, compared with 55 percent of high school boys, according to a report by the Harvard School of Public Health and the National Women's Law Center.

The reason? Plain old discrimination, says Neena Chaudry, senior counsel at the National Women's Law Center. Many female athletes don't have access to the same sports teams as boys. They also face lower quality facilities and harassment when they play on predominantly male teams.

"You can't say women are not interested if they are not given the opportunity," says Chaudry. "You could probably do that study anywhere and find the same types of problems."

Nationwide, girls represent just 42 percent of all high school and college varsity athletes, even though they make up more than half of the college population. Those who do play sports in college aren't exactly rewarded, either. Women playing on Division I and II teams received at least $133 million less in college scholarship money than men in 2000.

But a large college debt isn't the only concern they face. Women who skip out on sports are more likely to engage in sexual activity, smoke, use drugs, and become overweight. "It's a public health issue as well as a civil rights issue," Chaudry says.

—DEITRICH CURRY

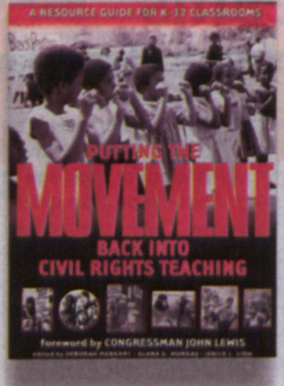
56 Percent of students who have their own E-MAIL ADDRESSES by the sixth grade.

BOOK FOCUS

Inside a Movement

"Too often, the teaching of the Civil Rights Movement—as a spontaneous, emotional eruption of angry but saintly African Americans led by two or three inspired orators—discounts the origins, the intellect, and the breadth that guided this complex social movement. Rather, strategic brilliance, logistical messiness, exalted joy, heart-gouging sorrow, sharp tactical conflicts, and near-religious personal transformations are all part of the very human story ending formal racial segregation in the United States."

So writes Jenice View at the beginning of *Putting the Movement Back into Civil Rights Teaching* (Teaching for Change and the Poverty and Race Research Action Council, 2004), a comprehensive teaching guide that moves educators past the headlines and into the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. This compelling collection of lessons, essays, interviews, poems, and art takes educators—and their students—inside the stories of the ordinary people who sustained the movement, with special attention paid to the contributions of women and youth.



Selections by Thurgood Marshall, Jesse Jackson, Malcolm X, Octavio Ruiz, Pablo Neruda, and several NEA members, among others, explore not only the experiences of Black Americans, but also of Mexican Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and women as they struggled for equality in this country. The interconnectedness of the different social movements plays a pivotal role in the various works.

The materials in the book—which meet or exceed national history and language arts standards—offer teachers the resources they need to present a more rounded and action-oriented history of the Civil Rights Movement and, ultimately, to empower "contemporary youth to understand themselves as the makers of history, not as passive customers."

ILLUSTRATION TOP: LEVAN/BARBEE; PHOTO BOTTOM: ROZ PAYNE ARCHIVES

Mutual Understanding

It's been said it takes a village to raise a child. Well, members of the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE) know it takes a group effort to educate one too—and to run the Association that advocates on the educators' behalf.

IN A UNIQUE PROGRAM designed to build new Association leaders, GAE brings together new teacher and ESP members for a weekend retreat. During the program, teachers and ESPs learn about the Association and the contributions each group makes to the education process.

Before Kathleen Thomason, an art teacher at Campbell Elementary School in Fairburn and new GAE member, attended the retreat, she didn't know ESPs could belong to a local affiliate. But, after sharing a room with a bus driver and learning about her Association involvement, Thomason understood the important role of ESPs. "They are part of the educational team," she says.

Teacher **Kathleen Thomason** has a new appreciation for ESPs.

For Lea Ogozelec, a bus driver and paraprofessional for Sweet Apple Elementary School in Roswell, the retreat helped her appreciate the stresses teachers face—and the hours they spend grading stacks of papers. "It was a great way to talk about what was involved in each of our jobs," Ogozelec says.

Ultimately, the program strives to create lifelong relationships and leaders who can tackle educational issues from all points of view, says Mark Perez, the UniServ director who oversees the program. "We are strengthened because we are no longer divided."

—DEITRICH CURRY

[NOBODY EVER TOLD ME] You've Got Mail!

A new second-year elementary teacher in my building learned an important lesson about e-mail use this year. Our school's e-mail system is a bit different from the one she used in her previous school. It features a specific mailing list teachers can select to send a message to the staff at our school only, a feature her previous school did not have. We also can access a mailing list that will send a message to everyone in the district.

THIS TEACHER WANTED to e-mail the staff at our school about her room's missing bathroom passes. So she typed up her message and clicked on the mailing list "All" thinking this would send the message to everyone in the building. Only later did she realize that the "All" list sends a message to the entire district. Every teacher in every elementary, middle, and high school, all of the secretaries, and even the superintendent were soon on the lookout for the missing bathroom passes.

This happened early in the school year and the teacher still is gently teased by people who tell her they are searching for her missing bathroom passes.

—BOB GRIFFITH
Classroom teacher, Longview, Washington

First Years

Two-Minute Tips

Oodles of Kudos

Keep a file of all the positive correspondence, thank you notes, e-mails, and evaluations you receive from parents, students, administrators, school board members, and members of the community. When you have a bad day, just thumb through a few of the nice notes and kudos and you'll remember why you're a teacher. These materials also will come in handy to support you if a parent or administrator has a gripe against you.

—TOM HRBACEK
Temecula, California

Proof of Purchase

When a student receives a D or F paper in my class, the student must have a parent sign the paper. This lets parents know how their children are doing. When a child returns a paper with a parent's signature, the child earns one point toward his or her grade and I highlight the grade in my grade book. If a parent requests a conference and implies he or she did not know how poorly the student was doing, I can let the parent know exactly how many low grades the child received that were not returned with a parent signature. This "proof of purchase" quickly lets the parents know they need to talk with the student about the D or F papers.

—MELANIE FINOTTI
Knox, Pennsylvania

Got a story about your first year on the job?

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PHOTO TOP: CAROLINE JOE; ILLUSTRATION BOTTOM: DIGITAL VISION

Busy Bees

Can it be that we have underestimated the value of the humble honeybee? Researchers—including two NEA higher ed members—at the University of Montana think so. These industrious insects responsible for pollinating most of the fruits and vegetables we eat also could be great environmental police. In fact, their foraging habits may be the key to sniffing out millions of buried land mines.

LAST YEAR, ENTOMOLOGIST JERRY BROMENSHENK, a professor at the University of Montana, and fellow NEA members Colin Henderson and Steve Rice, teamed up with explosives experts and the Department of Defense to train bees to follow certain colors and scents, such as the chemical plumes discharged by buried land mines. Traditionally, teams have used bomb-sniffing dogs to detect such explosives, but it is slow and dangerous work. Bees can be equally effective, hovering over areas that emit key scents. They also are quite efficient, says Bromenshenk, covering one mile in just four minutes.

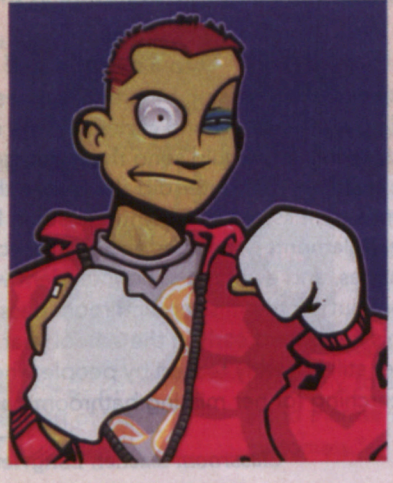
"We don't anticipate that bees are going to replace dogs any time in the near future, but they could be a very helpful adjunct to reducing [the size of] areas searched and setting priorities," he says.

Land mines exist in 90 countries outside of North America and, according to a recent study, maim or kill 15,000 to 20,000 people each year. Scientists estimate that it could take as long as 500 years to locate and disarm all land mines around the world. But, the Montana team believes that with sufficient support for research and development, bees could help get the job done in just 50 years.

A Safe Place To Learn

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students say they still find school an unwelcoming place—and that undermines their academic progress.

A majority of students surveyed say they experience verbal harassment in school because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and some are even subject to physical attack, according to findings of the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) biannual survey of middle and high school students. Such violence, or even the fear of violence, ultimately takes its toll in the classroom. Students who find the school environment hostile generally have lower grade point averages (2.9 versus 3.3), and 13.4 percent say they do not plan to go to college. Meanwhile, students harassed because of their sexual orientation are twice as likely to report depression or serious thoughts of suicide, according to a study published by the California Safe Schools Coalition and the 4-H Center for Youth Development at the University of California Davis.



"Most disturbing to me is that 83 percent of the time, when hateful things are said to these students, teachers don't do anything, which is seen as an endorsement of the behavior," says Kevin Jenkins, a former teacher and president of GLSEN. Teachers tell him they aren't sure what to do. Jenkins says that school standards against bullying must clearly include sexual orientation and teachers must receive guidance on how to intervene.

ILLUSTRATION TOP: MARTHA PAULOS; BOTTOM: DIGITAL VISION/PICTUREQUEST

Ready To Read

When it comes to teaching a child to read, focusing on the student's individual needs makes all the difference. That's something you probably already knew. But, new research from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Education has the numbers to back it up.

A THREE-YEAR STUDY comparing the highly scripted Direct Instruction (DI) reading program with more flexible methods found that students who received DI scored significantly lower in overall reading achievement, decoding, and reading comprehension. Those results remained consistent in urban and suburban school districts and across grade levels. Teacher involvement also played a critical role in student success, says Randall Ryder, a literacy professor and head of the study. Teachers who maintained a steady pace of instruction, set high expectations for their students, and encouraged student independence had classes that performed better. Simply put, teachers need to support the reading methods they use, Ryder says, and, consequently, deserve greater input on curriculum decisions.

"There needs to be a more balanced approach in how we look at reading instruction, maintaining the flexibility to do what's in the best interests of the child," Ryder adds. "That's the focus. It has to be the focus."

12.1 million

The number of **CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY** in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

And the Winner Is...!

When you've won the NEA Fitness Challenge, can *Survivor* be far behind?

NINE MONTHS AGO, NEA members across the country formed alliances with fellow co-workers to compete in NEA's first-ever national fitness competition. With advice from a team of experts—including a personal trainer, nutritionist, stress reduction specialist, and meditation teacher—Challenge participants huffed, puffed, and sweated their way to better health and buff bods. The results? Awesome. One team lost a total of 143 pounds. How will they stack up against the competition? Which team will win the grand prize—cash for their school? To get the skinny on the Challenge champions, check out www.neafitness.org, where we'll announce the winners on May 17. And don't miss the September issue of *NEA Today*, which will feature an in-depth profile of our champions.

ILLUSTRATION TOP: PAUL MANZ; BOTTOM: GREG PAPROCKI

Smile

During a lesson on the amendments to the Constitution, my sixth graders were eager to share their knowledge. One boy recalled that one amendment gives Americans the right to bear arms. I praised him and encouraged him to explain. He proudly replied that Americans have the right to dress however we want, including with bare arms.

—KAREN FINNEGAN
Cleveland, Ohio

As usual, my kindergartners were running late, so I sighed and repeated, "Hurry up, boys and girls!" The majority of the group formed a wiggly line, but Cindy sat contentedly completing her artwork. Time was ticking away. So, I took another deep breath and in my most pleasant teacher voice I said, "Come on, Cindy! Get speedy! Our line will be leaving soon!" Confident that she would join the group, we started our journey down the hall.

As requested, Cindy joined us at the end of the line. As I did my customary backward walk down the hall, I noticed that Cindy was having some difficulty. Much to my surprise, she was carrying a cage that contained our class hamster, Speedy. I started to laugh as innocence knocked me in the head. Apparently my interpretation of "get speedy" was a little different from Cindy's.

—NANCY DEMBKOWSKI
Mt. Prospect, Illinois

Have a funny school story, anecdote, or vignette you'd like to share?

> **By mail:**
NEA Today/Giggles
1201 16th St., N.W.,
Washington, DC 20036

> **By e-mail:**
neatoday@nea.org

> **Through the Web:**
www.nea.org/neatoday

'Plainspoken and Honest'

Two states have funded campaign laws to reduce the influence of special interest money and promote electoral competition—by folks just like you.

Maine state Rep. Jackie Norton says she isn't some "professional politician" pursuing power or money. Nope, she's a 38-year high school math teacher who sacrifices part of her annual income to represent the citizens of her Bangor district, and whose highest ambition is—honest—to improve the lot of public school teachers and students.

"I'm very pro-public education," says Rep. Norton, who belongs to the House Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, "and I believe that happy, healthy teachers make for happy, healthy students."

And that's not all. This Maine Education Association (MEA) member answers only to her constituents, because her last campaign was publicly funded under Maine's "clean election" law. Passed in 1996, the law was designed to reduce the influence of special interest money in politics and to increase electoral competition.

Four states have passed clean election laws, but just two of them, Arizona and Maine, have fully funded them. In those states, clean election candidates for state office agree to forgo self-financing and private contributions, except for a token amount of "seed money." The hopefuls must then submit a set number of petition signatures and five-dollar checks from registered voters to qualify for public matching funds.

IT WOULD BE HORRIBLE to have special interests pay my way, to have to deal with them when it comes time to vote!

—MAINE TEACHER-LEGISLATOR JACKIE NORTON

The jury is still out on the ultimate value of these laws, but politically active folks in the two clean election states report that this process is steadily yielding these results:

MORE TIME TO CAMPAIGN ON THE ISSUES. Arizona state Treasurer David Petersen, a conservative Republican who ran "clean" in his last election, told the U.S. Government Accounting Office: "In previous elections, I had to spend one-third to one-half of my time raising money. Clean elections made me become more of a grassroots candidate."

Maine Rep. Norton, a Democrat, agrees. "When I ran [as a privately funded candidate] for my first term," she recalls, "I spent as much time trying to raise money as meeting constituents, and I'm not in the habit of asking for money. This law freed me up to knock on doors and to ask constituents how they feel—to educate me to the issues."

MORE EDUCATION-FRIENDLY POLITICIANS. "Most of the candidates we supported in 2002 were clean and most won," points out Arizona Education Association (AEA) staffer Jim Lewis. "The House and Senate are better on public education, relatively speaking, than they were before."

Arizona's foremost "clean" incumbent is Gov. Janet Napolitano, who won a tight race two years ago with $3.2 million in public campaign funding. "She's a wonderful governor and a tremendous education advocate," says AEA President Penny Kotterman, "and she's proposing another progressive state budget this year."

Gov. Napolitano even joined 4,000 AEA members and other education stakeholders at a March 3 state Capitol rally to promote her budget—which advocates everything from all-day kindergarten to a boost in educator pay—and called on Congress to pay for the mandates of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the so-called No Child Left Behind law.

Maine state **Rep. Jackie Norton**

FEWER PRESSURES ON POLITICIANS. The Maine clean election law, which also limits special-interest political action committee (PAC) donations to $250 per candidate, has shielded Rep. Norton from some pretty compromising situations. "It would be horrible," she says, "to have special interests pay my way, to have to deal with them when it comes time to push the button to vote!"

FEWER ELECTORAL BARRIERS TO EDUCATORS. Because of Arizona's clean election law, "new and more people" are running for office, "including our members, whom we train how to run 'clean,'" reports AEA's Lewis. There are fewer new faces in the Maine legislature, adds MEA staffer Steve Crouse, but he predicts that will change over time and the result will be "good quality legislators, if not better, than what we have now."

More quality lawmakers, perhaps, like Jackie Norton—who thinks good educators make good political material. "They're good at dealing with people and they're fairly well-informed and patient in educating people," she says. And, yes, "They're plainspoken and honest."

—DAVE WINANS

FOR MORE on clean election laws, go to www.azclean.org.

PHOTO: MICHAEL YORK

Oklahoma

Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) lobbyists and members helped persuade legislators to create the state's first new revenue stream to public education in 14 years. A new law taxes and regulates the state's thriving Native American gaming industry, and is expected to yield at least $70 million in new revenue in the first year alone.

Other hopeful news for recession-battered OEA members: Gov. Brad Henry introduced a five-year plan to boost teacher pay to the regional average and fully pay teachers' individual health care premiums. "It's terrific to have someone with some vision for education in the governor's mansion," says OEA President Roy Bishop.

South Carolina

"I like truth in advertising," says Gary West, director of computing services for Greenwood School District 50. That's why West has carefully documented a disturbing fact: The two-year-old South Carolina Education Lottery has only shared 4.1 percent of its revenue with K–12 public schools since January 2002, or about 14 percent of the lottery money designated for "education."

Since the scheme began, gas stations and convenience stores have received almost $53 million more in lottery revenues than K–12 schools.

There are other losing numbers in this big game. While the lottery has hauled in some $1.8 billion, the state has cut K–12 funding by $372 million since the end of the 2000–01 school year, slashed per-pupil spending by 11.2 percent, and underfunded its own mandate-laden education accountability law.

Washington

In the last legislative session, the **Washington Education Association (WEA)** won increased state funding for health care benefits and a 1 percent state increase for education support professionals, starting next year.

WEA also gained legislation improving the Washington State Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) examination process. One measure allows students to retake the 10th-grade WASL four times, while another calls for a review of WASL cut scores. In 2008, passing the WASL or an alternative process will be a state graduation requirement.

WEA's ultimate goal: ensure that no single test is used to make high-stakes decisions about students and schools.

Florida

Volunteer lobbyists from the **Broward Teachers Union (BTU)** joined hundreds of other **Florida Education Association (FEA)** members and thousands of students at a March 17 rally to save the state's lottery-funded college scholarship program from budget cuts.

"It was a wonderful event, very well-organized," says BTU First Vice President Bernie Schutz. While FEA mobilized K–12 and higher education members, Republican legislative leaders organized rally logistics—even inviting the Florida A&M marching band—and provided key speakers, including the state senate president and the current Miss America, Erika Dunlap.

Maine

The **Maine Education Association (MEA)** has begun to help its local affiliates document and quantify "job creep" among teachers. MEA defines this phenomenon as the continuous "expansion of responsibilities, committee meetings, assessments, and reports that are adding to the workday and workweek."

Louisiana

Members of the **Lafayette Parish Association of Educators (LPAE)** signed a group grievance urging their district to rethink Project Lift, an instructional method in which educators teach a concept for a week, then test students on the concept to ensure they have learned it.

"I wish they would give us flexibility," LPAE President Rick Bailey told the local newspaper. "The teachers need to be trusted to teach. We feel like Lift has violated our classrooms."

Tennessee

Five **Tennessee Education Association (TEA)** members told the state House Education Committee about the overwhelming paperwork that teachers face and the interruptions that detract from valuable teaching time, everything from fund-raising to bus and car duty.

The educators made several recommendations to "win back" teaching time. Chairman Les Winningham vowed to make this issue a committee priority.

Arizona

Even paraeducators in the middle of the desert must become "highly qualified" under federal law—not so easy when the nearest college is two hours away.

That's what brought eight unorganized paras to the **Hayden-Winkelman Education Association.** HWEA signed them up, then brought in a para test preparation workshop designed by the **Arizona Education Association (AEA).**

The paras took care of logistics and AEA did the rest, using NEA's test prep manual and training help from Tucson para Carol Kirkland. "We got very positive feedback and they invited us back!" said AEA staffer Jeff Thomas.

"We can help people, but they need to join the union," said HWEA President Laura Lopez. "We can call in whatever it takes to solve your problem."

The Bush Record on NEA and its Members:

"guardians of the status quo"

—Rod Paige,
Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Education
USA Today, 9/17/02

"terrorist organization"

—Rod Paige,
Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Education,
Associated Press, 2/23/04

"an organization that tries to unravel the best hope that children have had in many years"

—Rod Paige,
Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Education
World Magazine, 10/4/03

" 'a coalition of the whining' to hold kids back"

—Rod Paige,
Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Education
USA Today, 7/7/03

"showing little interest in children and parents"

— Rod Paige,
Secretary, U.S. Dept. of Education
World Magazine, 10/4/03

Why does the Bush administration attack the 2.7 million members of the NEA?

Because we're leading the fight to fix and fund the so-called No Child Left Behind law, which threatens to leave millions of our children behind.

Because we're fighting for real standards and accountability in our public schools and against the Bush administration's negative labels and punitive sanctions.

And, we need your help.

Get involved. Volunteer. Register. Vote.

Elect a pro-public education president.

For more information on how to get involved, please go to www.nea.org/lac

We are the NEA.

nea
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
nea.org
Great Public Schools for Every Child

Creativity+Activism= New Members

Volunteer action teams give an Idaho local more strength at the table and greater visibility in the community.

NEA LOCAL AFFILIATE:
Meridian (Idaho) Education Association (MEA).

THE NUMBERS:

In past school years, MEA signed up barely half of the eligible teachers in Meridian, Idaho's largest and fastest growing district. But this year, the local's ranks have grown by 13 percent to 60 percent of potential. "We must keep growing," says MEA President Jerry Helgeson. "We can't let up until we reach 100 percent."

HOW THEY GOT THERE:

With assistance from the Idaho Education Association (IEA), which targeted 20 local affiliates for growth, MEA formed a volunteer Membership Team that created a detailed plan to recruit new folks at the middle school level, where membership was weak. Team members and local building reps then fanned out to sign up non-members the old-fashioned way: one-on-one contact.

Another organizing stimulus: Meridian teachers began this school year without a new contract, "which gave us an opportunity to educate potential members about the importance of bargaining with high membership," says IEA staffer Terry Gilbert.

MEA and administrators may not agree on everything, "but we are partners in the education of children," says Helgeson, a 40-year high school math teacher on Association leave. "We work a lot on an equal basis and there's great mutual respect."

That relationship, plus a growing MEA membership, helped keep things moving at the bargaining table. After a one-day mediation session, the parties signed a new one-year agreement in October.

THE BEST 'ORGANIZERS' OF ALL:

For all of the Membership Team's work, nobody has spurred MEA membership like state legislators in neighboring Boise. This session, Idaho's ultraconservative legislative majority approved a new Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)—a statewide, multiple-choice high school exit exam—coming on top of standardized "level tests" that Meridian students must now take to advance in subject areas. ISAT testing, already underway, has tied up some Meridian school libraries and computer labs for up to 12 weeks.

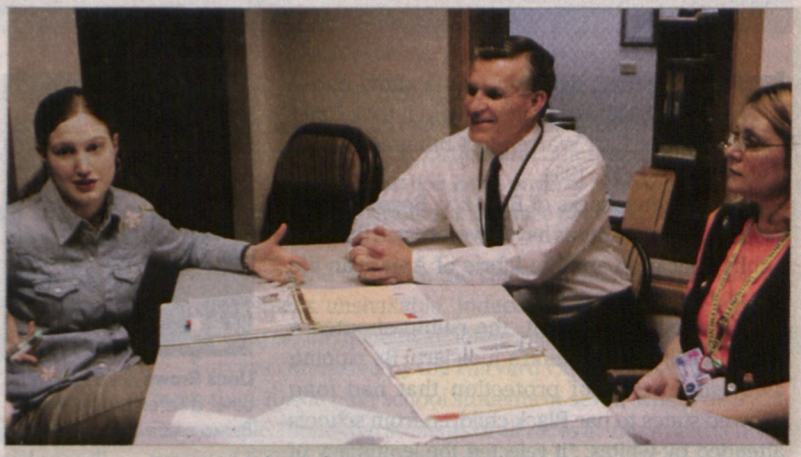
Pile on federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) mandates and school "progress" labels, and "you've got some teachers near the breaking point," says the MEA president. "They need us to help them get through this. It's made the Association more visible and more responsive to their needs."

PUTTING MEMBERS TO WORK:

MEA taps the energy of members who volunteer to work in one of four MEA "vision" areas—respect, professional development, pay, or publicity and pride—described on a "Stay in Touch" card each spring. Their time commitment has fed the growth of some highly creative grassroots action teams.

Last year, the Time Stress and Teacher Renewal Team hired a massage therapist to "power-massage" the taut muscles of members in nine elementary, middle, and high schools who racked up high MEA "stress quiz" scores for factors such as workload, class size, and "time in which to teach." This year, the Public Relations Team is generating teacher letters to newspapers and creating an electronic slide presentation for the community on the history of the 384-square-mile school system and the importance of public education to democracy.

Two other teams are surveying teachers on the viability of current and past education reforms (a useful lobbying tool) and working overtime to educate politicians and the public on the need to fully fund ESEA and give it greater flexibility. Meanwhile, the Negotiations Support Team, made up of members who completed a for-credit negotiations workshop, is assisting MEA bargainers by visiting school sites to survey members and research issues.



Talking shop, from left, are Meridian Education Association leaders **Sally Mitchell, Jerry Helgeson,** and **Tami Bromley.**

BRINGING IN NEW BLOOD:

One young support team member, Christie Maywhoor, showed such promise in the workshop's bargaining role-play session that the local appointed her as "trainee" on its negotiations committee. MEA has also placed four newer teachers—elementary teachers Tami Bromley and Kevin Spenner, middle school teacher Sally Mitchell, and high school teacher Jack Brown—into "at-large" slots on its executive board. "They're so energetic and they provide so much input," says Helgeson. "They've been a tremendous blessing to us."

—DAVE WINANS

FOR MORE, contact Jerry Helgeson at mermea@mindspring.com.

PHOTO: KIM HUGHES

50 Years

OF PROGRESS—AND STRUGGLE

It was a watershed moment in American history—
that remarkable day in May when the U.S. Supreme Court declared
separate schools for Blacks and whites inherently unequal.
Brown v. Board of Education would become etched in the public mind,
but what really was its impact on students, the community,
and particularly on NEA members themselves?

The historic decision was a short one—only 2,000 words or so—and it took Chief Justice Earl Warren just minutes to read it aloud on May 17, 1954.

But the aftershocks of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* have reverberated through public education and the fabric of American life like no other before or since.

As a legal precedent, the ruling shouted a wakeup call to the nation's judiciary. By ripping away the mantle of protection that had long allowed states to bar Black children from schools attended by whites, "it rejected the legitimacy of the existing system of apartheid," says Gary Orfield, co-director of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University. "Those fighting against segregation now had the law on their side."

Linda Brown (third left) and other children for whom the *Brown* case was argued.

As a social and cultural touchstone, the ruling emboldened those demanding racial equality—and provided hope for minority students who had endured the daily indignities of separate and decidedly unequal schools. "When the *Brown* decision came down—well, some of my classmates had a slogan we used to say," recalls Harold Gilbert, a retired teacher who then attended an all-Black high school in Gallatin, Tennessee. "Help is on the way."

Most significantly, *Brown* set public education on an irreversible course. In effect, it declared the sacrosanct mission of public education—to maximize each child's potential, inculcate the nation's shared values, and shape society's future—incompatible with racial separation. American public education, if it were to be, would truly have to be public education *for all.*

Living up to that promise, though, has been elusive—a journey marked by progress, resistance, court orders first mandating desegregation remedies then dismantling them, and scores of new programs from the local to the federal level.

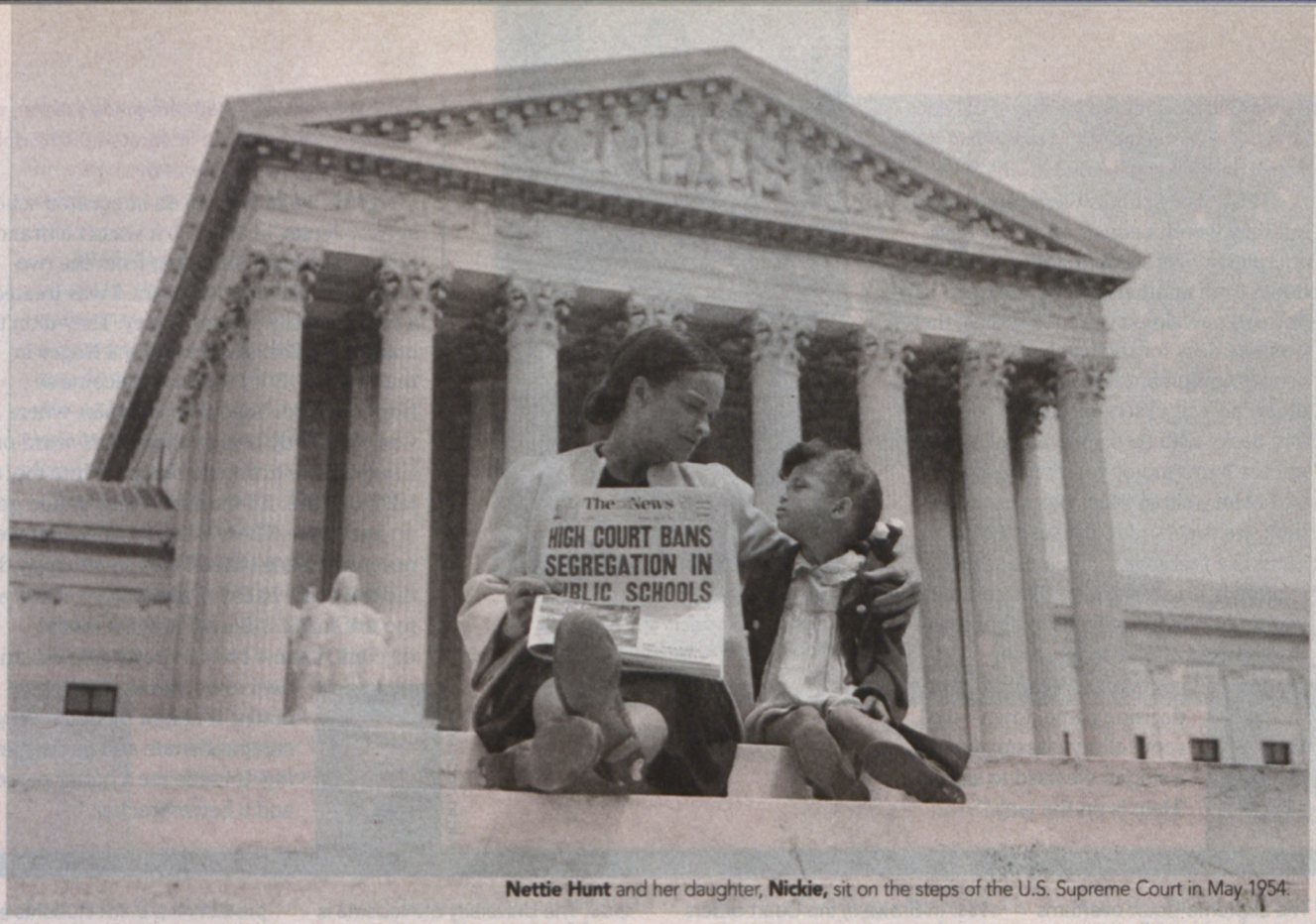
Relief was especially slow in coming to students and Black educators in the South. After the *Brown* decision, "Most folks felt the battle had been won," recalls Brumit DeLaine, a retired school administrator and teacher whose father, the Rev. J.A. DeLaine, was the organizing genius behind a Clarendon, South Carolina, protest that led to *Briggs v. Elliott,* one of five school equality cases the Supreme Court consolidated into *Brown.* Rev. DeLaine had spearheaded parent petitions calling for equal access to public school transportation for Black students, but the giddiness over what appeared to be its success—the *Brown* ruling—was short-lived.

"Everybody who signed those petitions, plain old common people, suffered consequences," says Brumit DeLaine, who was an 11th grader in 1954. Landowners evicted sharecroppers who had worked their properties for decades. White employers fired Black employees, including Rev. DeLaine and three other teachers in his family. Businesses serving Black customers were pushed into ruin, and Rev. DeLaine was run out of town and his home was burned to the ground. Worse yet, in his new hometown, he saw his church destroyed and his home attacked during a nighttime shooting.

Many NEA members who went to school or taught in the decade after *Brown* became the law of the land tell similar stories. (See pages 24–28 and Last Bell, page 64.)

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1965, the War on Poverty, and subsequent court rulings mandating integration through busing and other remedies, the journey toward equity post-*Brown* picked up steam. Black graduation rates rose, test scores for minority students went up, and schools began to expand their curricula to recog-

PHOTO: CARL IWASAKI/TIME LIFE PICTURES
PHOTO OPPOSITE PAGE: CASS GILBERT/BETTMANN/CORBIS



Nettie Hunt and her daughter, **Nickie,** sit on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court in May 1954.

nize the contributions and perspectives of ethnic minorities. In the courts and in Congress in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, and those with disabilities all won rights to improved educational services.

But then, some argue, progress toward realizing the promise of *Brown* stalled.

Schools grew more integrated between 1968 and 1988—only to backslide in the years following, says the Harvard Civil Rights Project. Since 1988, the percentage of Black students at predominately minority schools rose from 63 to 72 percent. Thirty-eight percent of Black students—and 42 percent of Latino students—now attend schools that are 90 percent or more minority.

In the classroom, gains for minority students slowed as well. The so-called achievement gap, which narrowed between 1971 and 1988 as Black students improved their achievement faster than white students, began to widen again (see page 29).

Even the landmark Elementary and Secondary Education Act, passed by Congress in 1965 to remedy the vestiges of segregation and aid children in poverty, lost its name—some would say its soul—as it was gutted during congressional reauthorization to fit a new agenda, emerging as the so-called No Child Left Behind law of 2001. NCLB, Orfield and others say, is now more a bludgeon than a support for high-poverty schools, and it may even undermine civil rights statutes (see page 29).

In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where the state has undertaken to provide it, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.... We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

—U.S. SUPREME COURT'S UNANIMOUS OPINION IN *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION*, MAY 17, 1954

Despite the setbacks, the challenge laid down by *Brown* remains unshakable. Indeed, new evidence is emerging on the benefits of integrated schools.

Surveys conducted by the Harvard Civil Rights Project with more than 20,000 high school students in seven school districts, for example, found that students of all races in integrated schools reported feeling more comfortable with peers of different races than students who did not attend racially diverse schools. They also showed a greater desire to eventually live and work in multiracial settings.

Another new study on the Class of 1980, based on extensive interviews with 242 adults in six communities, found that attending diverse schools helped people overcome racial stereotypes and form interracial friendships. Notably, many of those interviewed said their experiences in integrated schools were the most racially diverse of their lives—a finding that underscores the critical role schools play in bringing together children from different racial backgrounds.

"When our young people graduate and go out into the work world, they're going to be interacting in a diverse work setting," says Beverly Daniel Tatum, president of Spelman College and a self-described "integration baby," born two months after the *Brown* decision. "Being able to do that well is a skill that will only come with practice."

"If you look at the progress toward any big social issue, it's usually two steps forward, one step back," Tatum concludes. "We're now due for some steps forward."

—JOHN O'NEIL

Harold Gilbert, a retired teacher in Gallatin, Tennessee, was in the 10th-grade when the *Brown* decision was handed down.

1954 "The schools were separate, but they weren't equal. All of our basic equipment was secondhand, passed down from another school. We got nothing new. In our science rooms, there was one desk for the teacher with the proper equipment for science. In the other [all-white] school, each student had desks with their own burners. We got the hand-me-down textbooks that had been written years before....At the time, we accepted it, because it didn't seem like there were any avenues to change it. There were no Black administrators or elected officials to appeal to—there was nowhere to take your complaint. When the *Brown* decision came down—well, some of my classmates had a slogan we used to say: 'Help is on the way.'"

PHOTO: CHERIE DIEZ

Linda Brown (front, center) sitting in her segregated classroom at the Monroe School in Topeka, Kansas, in 1953.

Delores Brown, a retired fifth-grade teacher, was one of six students who integrated the Norfolk, Virginia, public schools in 1959.

1959 "I had been in an integrated school in New Jersey in 1958, so it wasn't a brand new experience. But going from the two states was like day and night. I was treated as a human being in New Jersey. They didn't make a big deal about having a Negro in their school. But I was not welcome at Norview High School [in Norfolk], where I was constantly being called the N-word or Charlie Brown. People bumping into me, not talking to me. If I sat down, they would get up and move. There were six of us, but we never saw each other. I was so unhappy that I did not come back for my senior year. It was too traumatic....Based on what I went through, I knew I would never allow a student to be harassed by classmates. It taught me to be very compassionate and understanding. It made me a better person and a better teacher."

PHOTO: YOON BYUN

1954 | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960 | 1961 | 1962 | 1963

Brown v. Board 50

1954. The Supreme Court overturns *Plessy v. Ferguson*'s "separate but equal" doctrine and declares in *Brown v. Board* that separate schools are "inherently unequal," unconstitutionally depriving students of equal educational opportunities.

1955. In *Brown II*, the Court orders the lower federal courts to implement desegregation plans "with all deliberate speed." The Civil Rights Movement, meanwhile, ratchets up full steam when Black citizens of Montgomery, Alabama, launch a yearlong bus boycott to protest racial discrimination in public transportation.

1956. The University of Alabama is forced by the courts to admit Autherine Lucy, its first Black student, setting off riots by white students and residents.

1957. Arkansas Gov. Orval Faucus tries to deny Black students entry to Little Rock's Central High School, and the federal government sends in more than 1,000 paratroopers to protect nine Black students entering the school.

1959. Officials in Prince Edward County, Virginia, resist integration orders by closing the county schools. They don't reopen them until forced by a Supreme Court order in 1964.

1954 | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 | 1958 | 1959 | 1960 | 1961 | 1962 | 1963

NAACP chief counsel **Thurgood Marshall** outside the U.S. Supreme Court, where he first argued the *Brown v. Board* case in 1952.

Martha Wood began her nearly 30-year teaching career in Virginia after graduating from college in 1959, the year many districts in her state were adamantly fighting the mandates of Brown.

1958 "While I was in college I got involved with a small act of civil disobedience at the lunch counter in Fredericksburg. A number of us went there with some Negro young people and they weren't served. So, we refused to be served and we were escorted out of the dime store. We were never officially arrested, but they took us out and made us leave.

It was such a small thing, but it really was the beginning of my sense of awareness of the injustices going on and of my willingness to stick my neck out. I needed to take part in it because I believed the way commercial businesses were treating people was wrong. It wasn't until the next year that I became aware of the situation with the public schools."

Gov. **George Wallace** (center) blocking the administrative building of the University of Alabama to two Black students attempting to register in 1963.

PHOTOS CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: HANK WALKER, CARL IWASAKI, SHEL HERSHORN/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

Grady Yancey, a retired teacher, was a ninth grader in Albany, Georgia, when he joined a group of Black students trying to register for classes at all-white Albany High School.

1962 "We were escorted to school by the police, and as we walked toward the school, I recall seeing several students hanging out the windows yelling racial slurs. It was a chilling feeling. We were taken to a room and given a registration form to fill out. At some point, a group picture was taken. The picture and information from the registration form identifying our parents appeared the next day in the *Albany Herald*. My mother, who was a hospital supervisor, went to work that day and was fired. She was told that the people working under her couldn't get along with her."

PHOTO: CAROLINE JOE

In 1957 **Elizabeth Eckford** (left) is jeered after being prevented by the Arkansas National Guard from entering Central High School in Little Rock.

1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973

1960. Students in Greensboro, North Carolina, begin a series of lunch counter sit-ins to protest segregation, setting off a national student sit-in movement, while federal marshals protect 6-year-old Ruby Bridges from a raucous crowd as she tries to enroll in a New Orleans school.

1963. The historic March on Washington draws hundreds of thousands of people demanding equal opportunity in education, employment, and housing.

1963. President Kennedy sends in the National Guard to the University of Alabama after Gov. George Wallace stands in the doorway to block entry of two Black students.

1964. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is adopted, paving the way for equal access to public facilities and specifically banning discrimination in employment and education.

1965. Riots by Blacks in Watts and other urban cities highlight the volatility of the struggle for racial equality in America.

1965. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is passed to ensure, with funds, that all children have a fair and equal opportunity for a high-quality education. Today, the law embraces Title I funding and other assistance to help educational needs of low achieving students and students with other special educational needs.

Brown v. Board

1964 | 1965 | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | 1972 | 1973

Mildred Greear, a retired teacher, is a civil rights activist in Helen, Georgia.

1964 "Around 1964 my husband and I got involved with a group in Rome, Georgia, that fought for the peaceful integration of public schools. We had meetings every month at City Hall, which was across the street from a gas station where a bunch of men hung around. They were known to be in the Ku Klux Klan. They used to call over to a pay phone outside our meeting room and yell obscenities and racial slurs to whoever picked up the phone. We learned not to pick up the phone at all. When we left the meetings, they often followed one of our cars, sticking right onto the bumper. But we persevered. A number of us helped integrate the Fourth Ward School. We'd arranged to link together Black and white students as they entered school. Why was this so important? I think being poor gave me some feeling for people who are hungry for whatever it is that's better than what they've got. To feed the hungry—to feed any hunger, whether it's for food or a kid who wants a crayon or to hear music played—that's driven me. It was all so damned illogical to me: that the pigment in your skin had anything to do with who you were, or what you could do."

PHOTO: PETER ZUZGA

Bob Peterson, a fifth-grade Milwaukee teacher, helped found the education journal *Rethinking Schools*.

1969 "In high school in Madison, Wisconsin, I helped organize walks against hunger and collected old textbooks for African-American schools in Mississippi. We drove them down and one afternoon I went around with a social worker trying to get parents to send their kids to school. The big problem was, the kids didn't have shoes....I remember Fannie Lou Hamer, the civil rights leader, coming to Madison for medical treatment. She had been beaten badly trying to register to vote, but she was so full of love. That had a big effect on an impressionable 11th-grade student....In 1976, during court-ordered desegregation in Milwaukee, I worked on a team to defuse tension. I remember dealing with student conflicts while the principal locked himself inside his office. *Rethinking Schools'* current issue on *Brown v. Board* brings me full circle. We need to understand the history to work well with kids and to advocate for new advances."

PHOTO TOP: FRANCIS MILLER/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

Myra Ruth Gray is a bus driver for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in North Carolina.

1971 "I started driving for the district in 1971, the year of the federal court desegregation order. I was paired with two elementary schools. I bused Black children from inner city apartments to a school in the suburbs, and white children from the suburbs to the inner city. There wasn't any trouble at all. The children actually got along and we got a lot of support from the parents. They'd show up at the bus stops with their children and made sure they got on the buses with respect. At the time, we were *all* learning how to show respect and support for one another. We knew we would all have to get along down the road and live together in the same neighborhoods as things progressed. Growing together meant a lot for the school system and the community. And the buses are a lot nicer now than they were then!"

PHOTO: BRYAN GOMSAK

Black students had to be bused from predominately white South Boston under heavy police guard in 1974.

Agnes Chavis is a retired North Carolina teacher and activist in the Native American community.

1972 "When I was growing up, we had three separate schools—one for the whites, one for the Blacks, and one for the Indians. Kids could live on the same road, but there were three different buses going up and down that road depending on what race you were. At the Indian school, we never got new desks or textbooks. We always got hand-me-downs with the white kids' names on them. Desegregation had been ordered by the courts, but it really didn't have much impact on our rural town until the 1970s, and things didn't change much for our school until we found out about the Indian Education Act. Even though it was passed in 1972, we didn't find out about it until later that year when two of our principals went to an NEA convention. We immediately applied for a government grant, and the money helped us get the materials and supplies we should have had from the beginning."

PHOTO: STUART THURLKILL

1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983

Brown v. Board 50

1966. The National Education Association and the all-Black American Teachers Association finally merge after having passed a much-debated resolution two years earlier.

1968. The Supreme Court throws down the gauntlet in *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* and orders states to dismantle segregated schools systems "root and branch," outlining specific standards.

1968. Congress passes the Fair Housing Act, barring discrimination against homebuyers on the basis of race, sex, and other factors, and the Bilingual Education Act, opening the way to special assistance for English-language learners.

1968. Martin Luther King Jr. is assassinated, setting off riots in D.C., Chicago, New York City, and other cities throughout the country.

1971. The Supreme Court, in *Swann v. Charlotte Mecklenburg Board of Education*, approves busing, school closings, and faculty and student reassignments to overcome the impact of residential segregation on public school segregation. The ruling sets off a storm of protests and riots that reverberate in cities throughout the country.

1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983

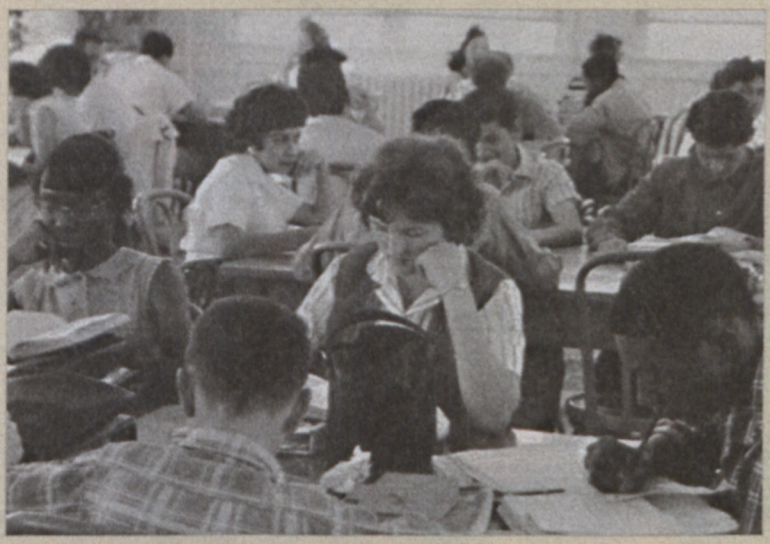
The Rev. **Martin Luther King Jr.** (second from left in front) led thousands in the 1963 Washington March for Jobs and Freedom.

PHOTO: RICK MCFARLAND

Willie Givens, was a student near Little Rock, Arkansas, when the federal government sent in troops to protect nine Black children trying to go to Central High.

1974 "I was going to S.A. Jones High School, an all-Black school in North Little Rock, when all the trouble happened at Central High. Some kids were saying, 'I wish I had been picked to go to Central.' Some others said, 'I'm glad it wasn't me because I couldn't have taken all that abuse…' Then in 1974, I went to work at Central High as head custodian. I felt good to be working at a historic school. By the time I got there, people got along. They did things together—basketball team, drama club, band. You still have some people who are just raised to dislike, but there are plenty of other students who are not going to let anything happen. The race ratio is about 60 to 40 Black-white and it's not changing much….My three children all graduated from Central. One of my grandsons is on the Central basketball team and plays in the band, and he's going to graduate this year."

PHOTO BOTTOM: TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES
PHOTO TOP: BETTMANN/CORBIS



In the years immediately following *Brown*, progress toward true desegregation was slow and fitful in many of the nation's schools.

Beverly Paige, an assistant principal in Shreveport, Louisiana, went to a high school whose student body was never integrated, despite court orders.

1974 "I never had the opportunity to go to a mixed race school growing up here. I remember sitting in the back of the bus. I remember the restaurants, the sections—'colored' and 'white'....When the courts signed our desegregation consent decree, students could choose to go to a school where they were in the minority, but if I had chosen a white school, I would have had to provide my own transportation. Some Blacks did that, thinking they'd get a better education. But I went to Booker T. Washington High School. No white students ever made their way there, but I was proud to go because it was a school with history and high standards....Today, while some things have changed, some are still the same. Black people still travel out of their neighborhoods to predominately white schools and many whites are still skeptical to come to mostly black schools unless they live in the neighborhood. Still, I keep a picture of Ruby Bridges in my office to remind me that the struggle was not in vain."

PHOTO: JESSICA LEIGH

1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993

1972. Congress passes the Indian Education Act, ensuring more resources to Native American students, and the Title IX Education Amendments, prohibiting sex discrimination in educational programs receiving federal funds.

1973. In *San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez*, the Supreme Court lobs a blow to minority and poor children by ruling that the Constitution does not require educational expenses for students be equal. It does rule, however, that states must provide equitable methods of financing public schools.

1974. The Supreme Court rules in *Lau v. Nichols* that the San Francisco school system violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by not providing English language instruction to about 1,800 Chinese students.

1975. Physically challenged students get federal protections when Congress passes the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which set the stage for the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act in 1997.

1978. The affirmative action admissions program at the University of California at Davis is declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court because it sets aside a specific number of positions for Black and Hispanic students. Race can be a factor in deciding admissions, the Court rules, but not the deciding factor.

Brown v. Board

1984 | 1985 | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993

PHOTO: JANET HOFSTETTER

Jennifer Lecy, 26, a high school special education teacher in St. Cloud, Minnesota, grew up in the 1980s, when desegregation was at its peak nationally.

1985 "I went to school in southwest Minnesota and it was diverse. There was a large population of Caucasians, but we had an Indian reservation outside our town so there was a large population of Native Americans as well and some Hispanic Americans. I really don't ever remember thinking about it. You knew everybody in town, you knew all your classmates. It really wasn't an issue what color skin they had, or what they looked like, or how much money they made. I remember school being pretty laid back and just getting along with others. You woke up excited to go to school in the morning and see everyone."

By the 1980s many American students attended integrated schools

Allan Bakke (center), who won a historic "reverse discrimination" case before the U.S. Supreme Court, leaves class after his first day at the University of California Davis Medical School in 1978.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE: BETTMANN/CORBIS

Lenora Scott is a mathematics teacher in Bishopville, South Carolina, and president of the NEA local affiliate—one of the first to support a much-watched lawsuit against the state, charging it has not fulfilled its obligation provide a "minimally adequate" education to South Carolina students.

1993 "Small rural counties like ours don't have the revenue base of larger counties. The poorer the district, the fewer the resources; the fewer the resources, the fewer the opportunities available for our students to be actively engaged in learning and extracurricular activities. Lacking adequate resources, we often find ourselves spending personal funds to purchase the smallest of classroom items. Application experiences are limited, thus stifling the creative juices of our students....Although we've made some changes for the better [since Brown], the *Abbeville* case tells us that there is more work to be done. We'll only know that we've arrived when there are opportunities for all students regardless of economic status, when students don't have to suffer because their parents don't work in affluent areas, and when everything's at the disposal of every student."

PHOTO: CHRISTOPHER BERRY

While students of all races and ethnic backgrounds attend schools together in many places, schools elsewhere are fast resegregating.

Brown v. Board 50

1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003

1986. The Supreme Court rules in *Riddick v. School Board of the City of Norfolk, Virginia*, that once a school district meets the standards for desegregation set out in *Green*, it can be released from its desegregation plan and returned to local control.

1988. School integration reaches its all-time high: Almost 45 percent of Black students are attending majority white schools.

1991. The Supreme Court begins making it easier for formerly segregated schools to fulfill their court obligations to desegregate, spurring what would become a slow, but steady abandonment of desegregation efforts by school districts across the country.

2002. Years of struggle to integrate America's schools are being undermined as more and more schools become resegregated, according to a report from the Harvard Civil Rights Project.

2003. The Supreme Court, in *Grutter v. Bollinger* and *Graz v. Bollinger*, upholds the limited use of race-based measures in university admissions programs.

2004. Fiftieth anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.

1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003

University of California at Berkeley students protest the repeal of affirmative action outside a meeting of the university's Board of Regents in 1997.

Mary Ann Pacheco is a professor of English at Rio Hondo Community College in Whittier, California, and chair of the NEA Hispanic Caucus.

2003 "Sometimes we think the *Brown* victory was for one group or by one group, but the victory was by a lot of different people. I think of the 1946 *Mendez v. Westminster* case [in which a group of Mexican parents in California successfully sued to outlaw segregation in public schools]. There really was a whole history of litigation and struggle before *Brown*. Still, when the ruling was handed down, it was a powerful statement that the old ways were not good and new ways would be better....But the fight is hardly over, particularly when it comes to higher education. If you don't have access to quality higher education, you can't become a decision maker in this country. Attacks on affirmative action have had a chilling effect. There's the high cost of school, too. Students of color tend to be concentrated in community colleges, but transitioning into four-year and professional schools is getting harder and harder. This is where I feel so much of the struggle is now."

READ MORE PERSONAL STORIES FROM NEA MEMBERS ON THE WEB AT WWW.NEA.ORG/NEATODAY.

PHOTO BOTTOM: DAVID BUTOW/CORBIS SABA
PHOTO TOP: CHARLES GUPTON/CORBIS

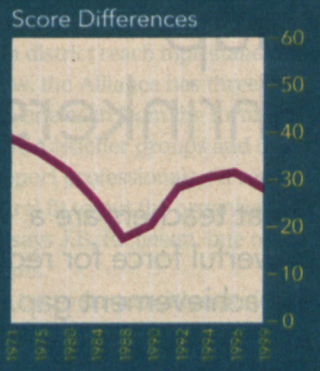
Another Intriguing History

Here's something to ponder: In the decades that followed the desegregation of many of America's schools, the achievement gap between white and Black students shrank by about a third. Then in the mid to late 1980s, progressed stalled.

That's the story told by a continuing series of tests given every few years to samples of students across the nation, part of a larger testing program—the National Assessment of Educational Progress, or NAEP—administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The particular NAEP series revealing achievement gap trends began in 1971 for reading and in 1973 for mathematics, and every few years since, students ages 9, 13, and 17 have been put to the test. The result: White students have consistently scored higher than Black students, but the difference in scores—the achievement gap—shrank notably from 1971 through the mid to late 1980s. After that, the gap widened again, although it's still much narrower than in 1971 or 1973.

In 1971, for example, the difference in reading scores for 13-year-olds was 39 points. By 1988, it fell to only 18 points. But in 1999, the difference was back up to 29 points, erasing half of the progress. The changes varied with age and subject, but nonetheless showed the same general pattern. New results in this series are expected next year.

The big question: What exactly was behind that narrowing of the gap when it happened? Social scientist David Grissmer, a leading researcher in the field, says desegregation and civil rights laws clearly played a role, along with aggressive funding for the War on Poverty. "Nobody has sorted out precisely what to attribute to what," notes Grissmer, who's with the RAND Corporation, a think tank based in Santa Monica, California, "but it happened at a time when the nation put significant effort into disadvantaged and minority kids and families."



The gap in reading scores between Black and white 13-year-olds fell to an all-time low in 1988 but bounced up again in the early 1990s.

The score gap between Hispanic and white students also got smaller during that time, but not as much as the Black-white gap. Still, Grissmer says, the progress among Hispanics was every bit as impressive. Because there were so many new Hispanic immigrants, he explains, the average education level of Hispanic parents actually declined. Hispanic children's test scores could easily have fallen, too, given that parent education is such a powerful predictor of children's scores. Instead, they went up, Grissmer says, probably for many of the same reasons Black student scores surged.

Two other NAEP test series begun in 1990 and 1992 show no consistent change in the achievement gap through 2003. For now, says Grissmer, "We're dead in the water."

A research-based strategy for jumpstarting the engine, he offers, is to pour more funds into early childhood education. Concentrated efforts must be made "in prekindergarten or the first two or three grades—full-day kindergarten, summer programs, lower class size."

—ALAIN JEHLEN

Legal Quandary

It could be called a question for the new millennium: Which federal policy should prevail in school desegregation situations—civil rights statutes and court orders or the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the so-called No Child Left Behind law?

Florida's Pinellas County school district—the seventh largest in Florida and the 22nd largest in the nation—was preparing at press time to go to federal court to resolve a growing conflict between these very policies.

It was perhaps inevitable.

Pinellas County is currently operating under a 2000 settlement of a federal desegregation case, which calls for a student assignment plan that gives more choice to parents in selecting schools for their children. Carefully and methodically, the district has spun out a delicately balanced initiative that evolves to full "free" parent choice by 2007–08.

But until then, the district is doing everything possible to make every campus attractive, building brand-new magnet schools—focusing on areas such as fundamentals, arts, technology, and "wellness and medical professions"—while maintaining fixed racial student percentages in the schools and mandatory "attendance zones" county-wide.

However, like a speedboat on placid Tampa Bay, ESEA threatens to swamp the racial progress made by the district. If any Pinellas school fails to make "adequate yearly progress" for two consecutive years, parents have a right under ESEA to transfer their kids to another district facility—knocking prescribed racial percentages overboard.

The federal government "can't have it two ways," says Jade Moore, executive director of the Pinellas Classroom Teachers Association, which backs the district's return to federal court. "Pinellas County has invested a lot of money in its 'choice' plan to build student diversity; it's an impressive effort. But ESEA puts a very delicate, complicated desegregation process at risk."

—DAVE WINANS

ILLUSTRATION: PHOTODISC

Gap Shrinkers

Great teachers are a powerful force for reducing the achievement gap. The AFT and NEA are working together on strategies to recruit and retain them for high-poverty, high-minority schools.

It's a well-known fact: Fifty years after the U.S. Supreme Court declared that racial segregation in public schools unconstitutionally deprives children of equal educational opportunities, poor and minority students are still more likely to be taught by the least qualified teachers.

What will it take to get a well-prepared teacher in every classroom—a move crucial to closing the nation's achievement gap? That was the focus of a two-day March summit in Washington, D.C., organized by NEA and the American Federation of Teachers, along with the NAACP, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the National Alliance of Black School Educators.

Emory University professor **Jackie Jordan Irvine**

TEACHER QUALITY is the most important factor in improving the educational attainment level of a child.

—NAACP EDUCATION DIRECTOR JOHN JACKSON

In many ways, the discussion raised as many questions as it answered. As NAACP Education Director John Jackson put it, "Teacher quality is the most important factor in improving the educational attainment level of a child." So how do we prepare high-quality teachers? And how, he asked, do we recruit, retain, and support them?

Jackie Jordan Irvine, professor of urban education at Emory University, recommended that school districts adopt a systematic approach to attracting qualified teachers, including loan forgiveness for tuition, low-interest housing loans, signing bonuses, and tuition for advanced degrees and certification.

She also suggested teachers be given the tools to succeed with a diverse group of students who have a variety of learning styles.

"Teacher education must focus on strengthening content knowledge and teaching methods, so that teachers learn not just one method, but multiple methods for working with children," she said.

Several summit participants said the nation's teacher quality crisis is especially acute among the poorest schools, which have the highest teacher turnover, the greatest numbers of teachers leaving the profession, and the highest daily rate of teacher absences.

Compounding the crisis are several unintended consequences of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, including the loss of thousands of African-American educators.

Mildred Hudson, CEO of Recruiting New Teachers Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Belmont, Massachusetts, said recruiting more teachers of color could be instrumental in shrinking the achievement gap because data show they are less likely to place minority students in lower academic tracks, generally have higher expectations for minority students, and can serve as role models of academic success.

"After *Brown* the number of Black teachers fell dramatically, and we saw in subsequent years an increase in tracking and ability grouping, which has resulted in the re-segregation of our classrooms," she said. Nearly half of the Black teachers in the South and border states lost their jobs.

Currently, only 14 percent of the 3 million public school teachers in the United States are people of color, while 35 percent of all students are minorities. Hudson said financial aid policies such as targeting money to community colleges, part-time students, and adult learners could help attract new teachers and diversify the teaching profession.

NEA President Reg Weaver told the summit that the achievement gap can be closed, but "one-size-fits-all" legislation like the revised Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the so-called "No Child Left Behind" law, won't do it. "The law stresses paperwork, bureaucracy, and testing," he said, "but we know from experience these things don't enhance student learning."

AFT Executive Vice President Nat LaCour added that the law presents a host of problems, not the least of which is its inadequate funding. Educating children should be a higher priority than "tax cut measures that leave no millionaire behind," he said. "Not providing a quality education to all of America's students is a weapon of mass destruction, for ignorance and poverty can cripple a person as well as a nation."

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) told the conference that the federal government needs to provide the resources so school districts can reduce class size and improve professional development for teachers.

A report on the summit's recommendations will be released in May in Topeka, Kansas, during a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of *Brown v. Board*. It will provide a comprehensive plan that legislators, lobbyists, and community-based organizations can use to improve teacher quality.

PHOTO: MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Standards For Educators

Ohio teamwork gives teachers a voice on professionalism.

Ohio teachers now have a stronger say on professionalism in their ranks thanks to the new Educator Standards Board (ESB), which was created largely through the legislative teamwork of the Ohio Federation of Teachers (OFT), the Ohio Education Association (OEA) and other pro-education groups.

Under a new state law, practicing preK–12 classroom teachers will make up the majority of the board, which will develop recommendations for statewide standards for educators. The state board of education is required by law to consider the ESB recommendations.

The ESB was signed into law this March after a long legislative struggle and a coordinated lobbying effort by the OFT and OEA to protect the heart of the proposal: a statewide body of frontline educators with the legal standing needed to influence state standards set for new and veteran teachers alike.

"This is a major breakthrough in terms of getting real teacher professionalism here in Ohio," says OFT President Tom Mooney. "A number of AFT and NEA locals in Ohio—Toledo, Cincinnati, and Columbus—have established career ladders and peer review programs, but this is the first statewide program that recognizes the importance of teacher professionalism."

"Teachers have long deserved the right to be involved in the decision making that governs the standards of the profession. This is an expectation of all professions and long overdue in Ohio. We expect this to strengthen and enhance the teaching profession, the quality of teaching, and the learning of students," says OEA President Gary Allen.

The law directs the ESB to develop Ohio's "master teacher" standards—additional avenues for teachers to assume leadership positions in schools—and to carry out other functions recommended by the Governor's Commission on Teaching Success, which was established to consider ways to attract, prepare, and retain excellent teachers.

Banding Together

San Antonio educators' unions gain strength by merging.

In Texas, thousands of educators belong to associations that charge low dues, offer little support for members, and strongly oppose collective bargaining. In some districts, the American Federation of Teachers and NEA locals have merged to provide a single, strong alternative.

One of those is the San Antonio Alliance of Teachers and Support Personnel, which made its merged debut last fall. The new local already boasts an impressive membership base comprising nearly 60 percent of the district's teachers. Membership among support staff is lower, and raising those numbers is one of the union's immediate goals.

Although there was some animosity when the two sides first sat down to discuss a merger, "we came to realize we both have the same goals in mind," says Carmen Garzes, a middle school teacher who served on the negotiating team and is now an Alliance vice president. "Now we can focus on issues and not on fighting the other organization and competing for members." For Garzes and other educators, that means overcoming all the challenges involved in helping students in an urban district reach high standards.

For now, the Alliance has three co-presidents: one each from the former AFT and NEA teacher groups and one for the support professionals. "It really was a natural fit to put the organizations together," says J.B. Richeson, one of the co-presidents.

After a two-year transition period, Alliance members will elect one president and two vice presidents. "Our goal is to be at a point where you look at people in the room, and you won't know which union they came from," says co-president Shelly Potter.

Ultimately, of course, the main reason to merge is "to make sure all employees in the district have as strong a voice as possible" when it comes to improving wages, working conditions and benefits, Potter says. But a strong union can also be a more potent political force, she adds, working to elect friendly school board members, for example.

Teacher **Carmen Garzes** was on the merger negotiating team in San Antonio and now serves as an Alliance vice president.

Rachel Martinez, the former AFT classified leader in San Antonio, is the third co-president.

Among the four other merged locals in Texas, Education Austin is by far the largest, with about 4,000 members. The union merged in 1999 and last fall faced an election challenge from two small independent associations. Austin school employees gave Education Austin an overwhelming 80 percent of their votes to remain their exclusive representative.

"The election enabled us to demonstrate to the school board and to the administration and to the public that the employees in this district clearly support Education Austin," says president Louis Malfaro. nea

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The NEAFT Report is a project of the NEAFT Partnership. A primary aim of the partnership is to keep members of NEA and the American Federation of Teachers informed about joint programs and areas of common concern. These articles were written by AFT staff writers Dan Gursky and Michael Rose and *NEA Today*'s Desda Moss.

PHOTO: ALICIA WAGNER CALZADA

Dream OR Nightmare!

PROMenade Down Memory Lane

If your school turns into Rydell High before every prom, you may feel like you've all seen *Grease* one time too many. Are your students frantic about finding a date? Worried about what they're going to wear? Too stunned by what it's going to cost to concentrate on algebra? Teach them that x (ex-prom date) plus y (why did I spend a fortune on my dress/tux?) doesn't have to equal a disastrous prom night. NEA members courageously share their own prom stories as living proof that there is a morning after.

A One-Act Tragedy, 1989

Couple stands in line for pictures. It's his school's prom on a Friday night. Her prom is Saturday, but she's decided to go to only one: Saturday morning's track meet and two dances might be too much. Her friend enters and excitedly approaches the couple.

Friend (to girl): Hi! Wow, that dress is beautiful! Is that the same one you're wearing tomorrow night for our prom?

Cut to shot of boy who suddenly realizes his date is going to two proms, but only one with him. Cut to shot of girl whose face strangely matches the emerald green of her dress. Fade out as oblivious friend walks away.

JOHN HAYWARD Communications art teacher
Naperville Central High School, Naperville, Illinois

Ooops! 1991

White dress, white shoes, white gloves, white stockings, and RED punch! Luckily, I was cheap and didn't spend a lot of money on my dress.

STACY PALEEN Math teacher
Park High School, Cottage Grove, Minnesota

Who Are You? 1967

The week before my prom, I showed my long, pink gown to long-haired Paul. He showed me his black tux. When Paul came to take me to the prom, I literally fell down the stairs when I saw he was not only bald, but wearing a red tuxedo!

BARBARA RICE Japanese language teacher
Clarkston High School, Clarkston, Michigan

A Date Is a Date, 1976

Spring 1976. U.S. government class. As we wait for class to start, I complain to a friend that no one has asked me to my junior prom. Suddenly, the nice, but slightly geeky, guy who sits in front of me asks if I'd like to go with him. I pause for only a minute before accepting; a date is a date.

Fast-forward to another spring day when out of the blue the same boy calls the same girl to see how life has treated her. They haven't spoken in 19 years. This time the magic happens. In December, I will have been married to my junior prom date for six years.

VICKY ROSSANDER Computer science teacher
Valley High School, West Des Moines, Iowa

Vicky and **Steve Rossander** posed for prom pictures on their first date. Twenty-two years later, they said, "I do"!

Happy at Home, 1972

Mine was the prom that wasn't. Back when you needed a date to fit in, I asked two girls and was turned down by both, the second laughing heartily in my face at the fact I'd asked her in the first place. It turned out my best friend had landed in the soup, too, and we both spent the night eating a deluxe pizza, watching our favorite NBA team, and saving hundreds of dollars apiece! *Epilogue:* We both survived to marry, have children, and lead normal, healthy, productive lives. I often tell this story to stressed-out teenagers who are trying to find boutonnieres and corsages, rushing to appointments at the beauty parlor, and wondering how they're going to look to their friends.

THOMAS M. SOBOTTKE World/U.S. history
Mukwonago High School, Mukwonago, Wisconsin

Fool for Love, 1966

I spent the entire night of my prom sitting at my girlfriend's kitchen table drinking coffee with her mother while in the back bedroom all my girlfriend could do was scream and cry about her hair. It was after midnight before she came out of the bedroom!

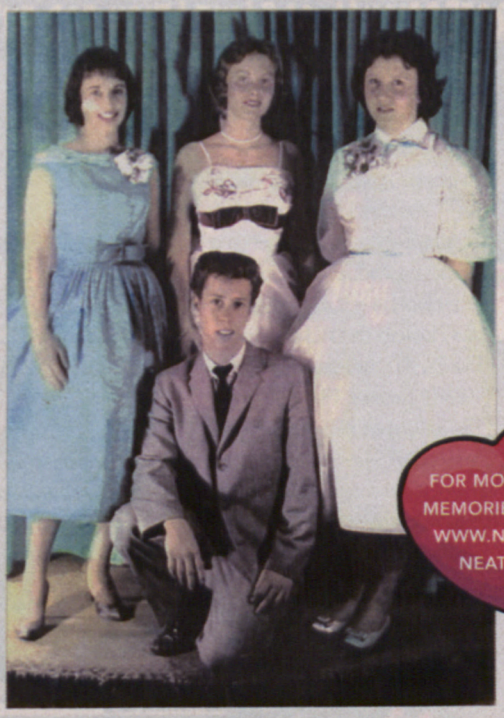
JAMES BAUERNFEIND Criminal justice teacher
Mt. Juliet High School, Mt. Juliet, Tennessee

A caring community gives high school students a prom to remember.

A Night To Remember, 2003

With the help of teachers, parents, chaperones, and other benefactors, all 13 students from my life skills support class were able to attend their senior prom last year. Many of my students come from "financially challenged" homes, and attending the prom was a once in a lifetime opportunity. With $1,000 from a mini-grant, we arranged for limousines through a connection with a local business, received a big discount on tuxedo rentals, and either purchased gowns or used gowns donated by volunteers. The kids absolutely loved the prom. For everyone involved, it was a night to remember.

EILEEN KARWASKI Life skills support teacher
Marple Newtown High School, Newtown Square, Pennsylvania



FOR MORE PROM MEMORIES, GO TO WWW.NEA.ORG/NEATODAY

Joan Strasser (center) and her prom buddies are still friends 45 years later.

Hopelessly Devoted, 1959

The cutie in blue is his date
We in white friends
Who'd wished him our mate.
Lust and love had divided us
But this night united
One prom picture
could we create.

JOAN STRASSER
Resource specialist
Grant Elementary School, Richmond, California

All's Well that Ends Well, 1970

I was a "nerd." I didn't know you were supposed to plan where to sit before the prom or make dinner reservations for afterward. Luckily, my date and I found a table at the prom and a restaurant with an available table afterwards. In the car while driving home, he said, "Here!" and threw me his high school ring. Thirty-four years later, he's a bit more romantic; I get flowers weekly. But, more important, he cleans dishes and bathrooms!

SUE PTAK Kindergarten teacher
Bryant School, Harvey, Illinois

Prom 101

Shelly Fryer's "Economics of Prom" class has become a big hit with the students at South High School in Torrance, California. Students look forward to the spring project all year long, when they learn how to prepare prom budgets that cover attire, transportation, tickets, accessories, and any other expenses that might come up on the big night.

"Depending on what region of the country you're from," says Fryer, "proms can cost anywhere from hundreds to thousands of dollars."

Fryer decided to teach the class when she realized how many of her students were being "taken for a ride" around prom time, like renting unlicensed limos that took the kids' money but didn't show up. Fryer also gives an electronic slide presentation on prom etiquette, safety, sobriety, and safe sex. Students say the lessons they learn in the class help them make better decisions at prom time.

LOOKING FOR PROM ADVICE TO SHARE WITH YOUR STUDENTS?
Check out Fryer's Web site at www.teacherweb.com/ca/shs/mrsfryer. You can also visit www.promadvice.com.

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Great Public Schools for Every Child

Super-subs

What makes 1,000 Angelenos, many with strong résumés, line up to substitute teach?

Los Angeles substitute teacher Robert Rivers uses a technique for controlling unruly classes that could have been inspired by Hollywood: He phones home. One recent day teaching sixth grade, he had to resort to his cell phone three times. No parents were there, but he talked with two brothers and a grandmother, seeking help to make a child stop disrupting the class.

"Even when it doesn't get that student to behave, calling home helps me keep order because the other kids don't want me to pull out my phone," he explains.

Rivers—tall, solid-looking, with a baritone voice and a powerful presence—gets less lip than most substitutes. But even he struggles to keep the lid on a room full of students who know they won't have him next week.

Rivers has held responsible jobs in the Navy, the Urban League, and IBM. Why take so much grief? Because he loves to see a student light up with understanding. "If I reach one kid a day, I'm happy," he says.

L.A.'s substitute legion includes former aerospace engineers, curriculum designers, and authors. And there are 1,000 more on a waiting list, eager to tackle L.A.'s tough classes.

Elsewhere, school systems are beating the bushes and lowering standards to find warm bodies to work as substitutes. The Substitute Teaching Institute at Utah State University says 90 percent of districts have trouble finding enough.

What's different about L.A.?

Two words: pay and benefits. A day-to-day substitute in Los Angeles makes $156 a day, or $211 after 21 days. Those who work 100 days a year get full health insurance the following year.

Robert Rivers would love to connect with students where it matters most. Too often, he's forced to spend time keeping order.

That's probably the best package in the country, says Doug Provencio, a veteran Oakland, California, substitute who leads NEA's Substitute Teachers Caucus. A government survey of large school districts found that their average substitute pay was $87.50 a day last year. Most substitutes get no health insurance. Utah State reports that a majority of states only require a high school diploma for a substitute.

But the substitute teacher is a critically important educator. The Institute estimates that from kindergarten to high school graduation, students spend a full year with substitutes.

In L.A. and some other communities, substitute teachers belong to the educators' union—in L.A., it's United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), a joint NEA-AFT affiliate. Their pay and conditions are bargained collectively. That's why the pay package is attractive to people with strong credentials, says Leonard Segal, the substitutes' representative on the UTLA board of directors. Unfortunately, he adds, most local teachers' unions leave substitutes to fend for themselves.

Caucus president Provencio says a good contract requires that a substitute who works a certain number of days with one class be paid like a permanent teacher. That way, administrators are not tempted to fill positions with long-term substitutes.

Some unions have bargained training for substitutes into their contracts. In Wisconsin, the NEA-affiliated Wisconsin Education Association Council runs its own course for substitutes, covering everything from protecting yourself from bloodborne pathogens, to what to do when you can't find the permanent teacher's lesson plan. The course has graduated thousands since it was founded in 1996 with a grant from the NEA Foundation for the Improvement of Education. More than 150 have completed a new, online version.

Respect is another vital condition for getting and keeping good substitutes. "I wish more teachers understood that substitutes want to be treated like staff," says Dorothy Hearn, a substitute in Montgomery County, Maryland, who was a permanent teacher for six years. "There are times when you go

into the staff room and nobody will talk to you." Other times, she does feel appreciated by teachers and by her students. Once, at the end of a day with a sixth-grade class, she'll never forget how "all of a sudden students started standing up. I thought there was some kind of trouble. Then they all started applauding!"

—ALAIN JEHLEN

FOR MORE: Visit NEA's Web site, www.nea.org/substitutes; the NEA Substitute Teachers Caucus site, www.substituteteachers.org; and the National Substitute Teachers Alliance at www.nstasubs.org. *Standing in Your Shoes*, by Doug Provencio (NEA Professional Library, www.nea.org/books), helps permanent teachers prepare for a substitute, and helps substitutes do their job well.

PHOTO: BOB RIHA JR.

Autism: The Debate Rages

During the last decade, the meteoric rise in the number of autism cases has become a lightning rod for controversy. Are we seeing an epidemic or just changes in the way autism is diagnosed? Is there a connection between childhood vaccines and the rise in autism, or are vaccines just getting a bad rap?

Which side you take probably depends on which experts you talk to—and when you talk to them. The controversy took an unexpected turn last month when a group of scientists renounced their own research—a well-publicized 1998 study pointing to a potential link between autism and the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine. Ten of the 13 researchers, led by Simon Murch of Britain's Centre for Pediatric Gastroenterology, now say they didn't have enough data to establish a link.

The debate is by no means over, however. With the number of autism cases increasing by 172 percent in the last decade, some researchers and advocacy groups still believe there is a connection. One theory is that autistic children are genetically susceptible to the mercury in some vaccines. Another theory is that vaccines are only the final trigger for a buildup of mercury that begins in the mother's womb. Still another implicates the measles virus in certain vaccines. The Institutes of Medicine recently held hearings with experts on both sides of the issue and will publish a report of their findings this month. "The debate will continue as long as the cause of autism remains a mystery," says Ayda Halker, of the Autism Society of America. "More research into the origins of autism needs to be done."

To get clarity on these issues, Paul Sathrum, of NEA's Health Information Network, spoke with Dr. Andrew Zimmerman, research scientist and pediatric neurologist at the Kennedy Krieger Institute, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

What is autism?

Autism is a neuro-developmental disability that affects a person's ability to communicate and interact socially—sometimes profoundly. In fact, there is a spectrum of disabilities related to autism—usually referred to as pervasive developmental disorders—that can range from mild to severe. The symptoms of autism typically appear within the first three years of life and are four times more common in boys than girls.

How is autism diagnosed?

Autism is diagnosed by the observation of three signs: **delayed speech and language, difficulty with social contact,** and **repetitive or odd behaviors.** All three must be present in a child for a diagnosis of autism. About one-third of children with autism develop normally and then begin to regress, usually around 18–24 months of age. Approximately 80 percent of children with autism have a degree of mental retardation, while 20 percent are able to function in the normal range of cognition. This means that a person who sits next to you glued to a computer screen and who almost never interacts with others may have a mild form of autism.

Why have we seen such a dramatic increase in autism cases in recent years?

The three most likely reasons for this sudden, apparent increase are: **improvement in diagnostic techniques, recognition of signs and symptoms,** and a **broadening of the definition of autism.**

What are the most likely causes of autism?

Autism was first identified in 1943 by Dr. Leo Kanner. During the 50s and 60s, it was thought to be caused by bad parenting. In 1970, Stella Chess, professor of child psychiatry at New York University's School of Medicine, was the first to assign a biological origin to autism when she observed that one-third of children with rubella, or German measles, were autistic. Most researchers believe that autism has a genetic basis, with changes in the brain occurring prior to a baby's birth.

Where did the theory that vaccines could cause autism originate?

The vaccine and thimerosal (a mercury-based preservative) theory was fueled by observations that many of the changes seen in autistic children occur around the time childhood vaccinations are administered. For many people, it's logical to draw a causal relationship. It is possible that a small handful of childhood vaccinations, or other environmental factors, may actually exacerbate the process, but there is no evidence they cause autism. In fact, the overwhelming majority of epidemiological studies refute the vaccination theory or find no connection. [*Editor's Note:* Most of the researchers who believe there is a connection are involved in clinically based studies.]

What are some approaches schools should take to address the educational needs of an autistic child?

While autism affects individual children differently, it's important to remember that all children improve throughout life. The key is early diagnosis followed by intensive speech/language and behavioral therapies. School personnel must be given the skills and encouragement to work with children with autism. A good teacher makes all the difference!

FOR MORE

No matter what the cause, the bottom line is that educators need creative and effective ways of relating to and teaching the growing number of children with autism in their classrooms. Three excellent resources are:

The Autism Society of America at www.autism-society.org
The NEA IDEA Cadre at www.nea.org/specialed
The American Psychiatric Association, National Institutes of Health at www.psych.org.

They Don't Just Push a Broom

School custodians, the 'guardians' of indoor air quality, get a new tool from NEA.

The indoor air quality of Torrington High School (THS) in rural Wyoming heads south twice weekly when the cattle come east to auction. Pungent brown and green dust wafts from the Torrington Livestock Auction grounds, over the THS football field and into the jurisdiction of head custodian Bob McCarty. "It's hard to keep the school clean," he says with a shudder.

Bob McCarty says custodians need training to say, "That's not right."

McCarty, who supervises the cleaning and maintenance of THS's five buildings, is understandably "passionate" about the issue of sickening indoor air, whether he's talking about dust, mold, or chemicals.

And this nine-year veteran knows his trade. He can list the finer points of good school housekeeping and preventive maintenance—everything from the use of environmentally safe cleaning chemicals to the proper inspection of roofs, filters, and air intake vents.

McCarty, and many other ESPs like him, are what NEA President Reg Weaver calls "guardians of the indoor air environment." That's why two NEA units, the Health Information Network (HIN) and the ESP Quality Department, recently consulted with McCarty and other seasoned custodial staffers to create a useful new brochure, *Take a Deep Breath and Thank Your Custodian.*

This easy-to-follow document focuses on custodian "tips and tools" for minimizing staff and student exposure to common indoor air hazards. It also outlines steps local affiliates should take to move administrators off the dime on indoor air quality (IAQ) issues, from drafting a detailed action plan to building a local health and safety committee.

"This brochure doesn't just recommend IAQ-friendly tips. It aims to empower custodians and their locals to win long-term improvements in indoor air quality," stresses NEA HIN staffer Jennie Young. "We hope that administrators also read it and get a feel for what custodians must deal with."

Among their challenges:

Insufficient training and respect. McCarty, who's active in the NEA Healthy Schools Caucus, reports that many custodians across the country still lack basic training on "environmental issues and responsibilities [and the] leadership skills needed to stand up and say, 'no, that's not right.'"

McCarty notes that administrators are often slower to listen to a custodian than to a teacher when IAQ problems arise. Yet custodians are the "front line" in any battle for cleaner indoor air, he stresses. "We know where the building problems are. They're either intentionally overlooked or there's not enough time to fix them."

"Custodians see things we teachers don't see, and we see things they don't see," adds Diane Swaim, an eighth-grade social studies teacher in Middletown, New Jersey. "But we don't see our custodians getting the training they need. They're just expected to push a broom, with no wider role in the working environment."

Insufficient employee unity. NEA HIN's Young says custodians are often blamed by staff colleagues for problems they can't control, such as noxious cleaning chemicals they don't get to choose. "All of us work in the same buildings, so it's important for all of us to work together on IAQ issues," says Swaim, who's also president of the Middletown Township Education Association.

MTEA has just organized a Health and Safety Committee, chaired by fifth-grade teacher Debbie Mrkalo, "and I will recommend that we include custodians, even though they're in another union," Swaim adds.

Committee members have been trained to take "walk-throughs" of their own buildings using IAQ "hot spot" checklists. "When those inspections begin, we need to involve custodians," Swaim emphasizes.

Insufficient funding. Budget problems can make life harder yet for custodians, but that's no excuse to surrender the role of IAQ guardian. "Many IAQ tools are not big money items," stresses McCarty, "be they a change in housekeeping practices or better-quality, pleated filters to keep allergens out of the air."

Perhaps the best—and cheapest—tool of all: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's IAQ Tools for Schools Kit. That kit and NEA's *Thank Your Custodian* brochure are both available for free. To learn more, visit http://neahin.org/programs/environmental/iaq.htm.

—DAVE WINANS

More ESP stories in this issue:

- **Department of Defense targets teacher, ESP rights** – *Page 12*
- **New Georgia ESP and teacher members forge links** – *Page 15*
- **Arizona local helps paras become "highly qualified"** – *Page 19*

PHOTO: TOM DOWNEY

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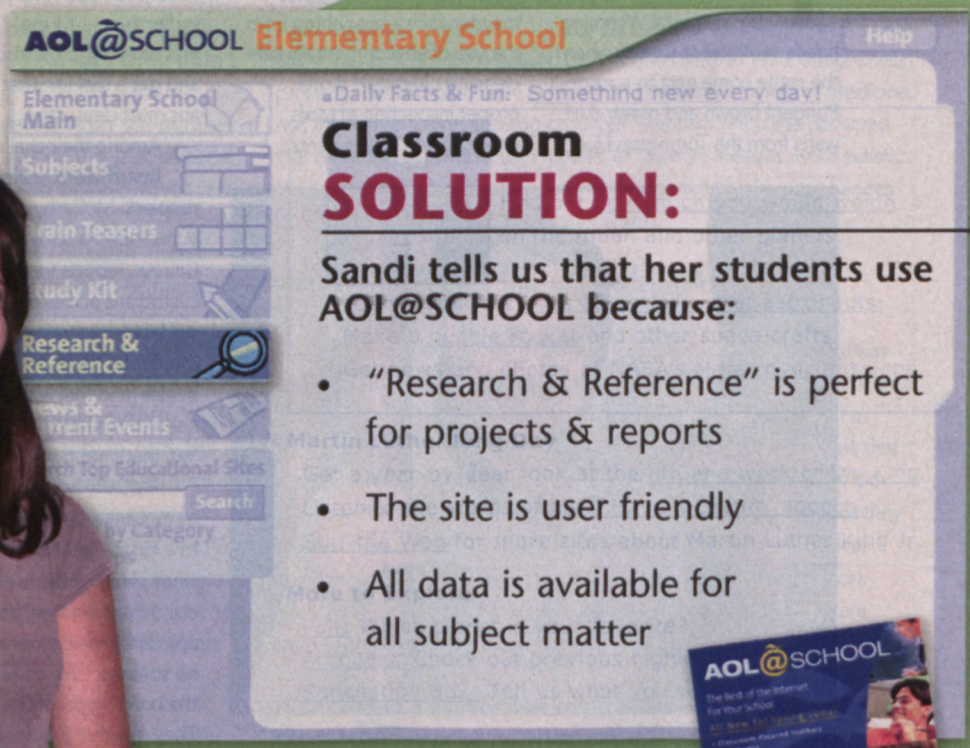
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Should we reward good grades with money and prizes?

YES

I believe we can offer prizes, food, money, or field trips to students for good grades. I don't see the difference between offering students prizes and money for good grades and having a "3.0 dance" or special assembly. A reward is a reward.

Most students who work hard for good grades would do it without the prizes and dances, so the prizes and money are simply an added bonus that they can choose to accept or decline.

Students who cheat, beg, badger, and whine for a good grade in order to earn money or prizes generally do not maintain a good grade for long. Intrinsic values usually have the upper hand in the end.

MARGO UNGRICHT Seventh-grade English teacher, Lehi, Utah

Students should be rewarded for good grades. I view school for students similar to the way I view a job for an adult, and I believe it's appropriate for parents to provide monetary rewards for good work and penalties for poor performance. If you are late for school, money is deducted. If you miss a day for illness, money is deducted. If your performance suffers, so will your pay. It gives students a chance to relate real-world experiences to school-related tasks.

This may not work for every family or for every child, but it's one of many things a parent can do.

My husband and I reward our eight nieces and nephews for earning good grades on their report cards. We give them $5 for each A and $3 for each B. Money is deducted for each C, D, and F. When their report cards come out, they call us immediately. They all do well in school and we want to show them we value their achievements, the same way a future employer will when they perform well in their jobs.

However, I don't think it is appropriate for teachers to use money as a reward. There's a fine line—a teacher giving the whole class a pizza party for a job well done could be appropriate, but a teacher giving money as a reward would cross the line.

TENNILLE JONES-LEWIS High school guidance counselor, Alliance, Ohio

NO

The only money and prizes a student should be given for good grades are the better money they will earn as adults and the prizes of self-esteem, pride, and commitment to attaining the highest level of their educational and intellectual development.

Instead of the student asking, "What will you give me for trying?" we should be asking students, "What will you be giving yourself for your future if you apply yourself?" The ultimate reward for a good education is a secure and rewarding future.

KAREN BARKSDALE Ninth-grade English teacher, Memphis, Tennessee

External rewards undermine students' natural eagerness to learn. When we offer kids money and prizes, we cheapen the value of learning. We have all seen kids who become so accustomed to external rewards that the presents, candy, or money are what they want, rather than the academic achievement itself. I recently overheard a teenage girl and her father arguing about how high her grades needed to be in order to get a car, and what kind of car it would be. The conversation had everything to do with the prize and nothing to do with learning.

Our ultimate goal is to create citizens who make decisions for the right reasons—not because someone is dangling a prize in front of them.

BRENDA NELSON Social worker, Barrington, Illinois

When students receive good grades, it is because of a team effort. The parents in most cases have worked diligently in the evenings with homework, the paraprofessionals have put in time and effort, the teachers do the same. How do we determine who made that achievement possible?

We had a second-grade student who knew seven sight words when he came to our school. He was on target by the end of third grade. That happened because of his parents, classroom teacher, paraprofessionals, and the special education teacher who kept him focused, as well as the student's own motivation to learn. Who deserved a prize?

MARY BUNGERT Special education teacher, Topeka, Kansas

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION?

Should we reward good grades with money and prizes?
To vote, visit our Web site at www.nea.org/neatoday and see the results instantly.

Have science fair projects grown out of control?
The tally on the question in the last *NEA Today*:
89% Yes 11% No

Should public schools offer the option of single-sex high schools?
If you'd like to take part in this future Debate, send a brief note to Alain Jehlen, **ajehlen@nea.org.**

ILLUSTRATION: PHOTODISC; IMAGE CONSTRUCTION: GROFF CREATIVE, INC.

What do you do when students show **physical affection** for each other in school?

Sign of Spring

In our rural North Dakota school, even when blizzards still rage outside, public displays of affection in the halls are a sure sign of spring.

Usually, with most teachers, students get off with a sharp warning. Repeated offenses or extremely seductive moves get written up and are treated like any other non-compliance. At our school, lingering kisses, body rubbing, and inappropriate touching are considered extremely seductive moves. I don't hesitate to write up a student for such conduct because I think that kind of behavior embarrasses other students.

A write-up requires that a student meet with the principal and disciplinary action may be taken. Some have received out-of-school suspensions.

ROXY JOCHIMSEN High school English teacher, Dunseith, North Dakota

Old-fashioned Lust

First of all, it's not affection, it is old-fashioned lust. Second, what part of sexual harassment don't you get?

I walk up to them and ask the female student, "Do you need help? Things are looking a little out of hand." Yes, I really do. And in several cases, the girl took the opportunity to disappear into the restroom, or to get on with her life.

That is not to ignore the time that I offered the same question, only to discover that it was the young man who was being assaulted by the girl. Both got suspension.

"Affection" is not the dilemma—moving education forward is.

Just because we are not the parents should not mean anything goes. Students sometimes give that answer: "You can't tell me what to do with my girl or boyfriend—you are not my mom!" In California, the legal concept of "in loco parentis" does exist. It gives school employees rights and obligations in the care of students, in the absence of the parent.

SUZANNE EMERY Retired journalism teacher, Poway, California

Close to You

At our school, teachers usually try to break up the pair using humor. I try to keep it light: "Come on! Break it up! Go to class! Get an education! Make us proud!" It helps to stand next to them. This usually adds extra motivation to pry the two asunder.

However, if a young couple refuses to break it up or behaves in a totally inappropriate manner, I would write up both students.

What behavior constitutes a gross act of affection differs from teacher to teacher. For me, groping would do it.

We have 2,000 students in our high school, but I have yet to see what I would consider a gross act by a student. I see lots of hugging and a little kissing. Apparently, they take care of their hormones outside school!

PAM WENSING High school English teacher, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

COME ON! BREAK IT UP! Go to class! Get an education! Make us proud! —PAM WENSING

Get Unstuck

At our high school, kids are allowed to hold hands or exchange short, friendly hugs. When it goes beyond that, I try to make it very uncomfortable for them. I ask, in a loud voice, if they need help getting unstuck or if I should take a picture for their parents.

If I see that sort of activity from them again, I'll quote to them from the student handbook and offer to take them to the office so they can explain to the principal why they felt the overwhelming need to violate school rules. For that reason, I have not seen open shows of affection for quite some time.

DON MACK Technology facilitator, Laramie, Wyoming

No Kiss

I teach seventh and eighth graders. Our school policy states that students should refrain from showing signs of affection on school grounds. Embracing results in a warning. Kissing and necking result in both students being sent to the office.

STEPHEN SOMMERFIELD Technology education teacher, Portland, Indiana

Serenade

If I know the students well, I have been known to sing the *Love Boat* theme song as I walk by. If I don't know them very well, a great approach is to gather a few students and serenade the couple with a romantic song. This is a fun way to confront an awkward situation. Most of the time the couple will laugh and cool things down.

KYLE KNIVETON Spanish teacher, Wenatchee, Washington

GOT AN ANSWER?

How do you prepare for a substitute teacher? E-mail your answer to **dilemma2@list.nea.org.** Or send by regular mail, or fax to 202-822-7206. Include your name, city, state, and job. If published, you will receive an *NEA Today* mug!

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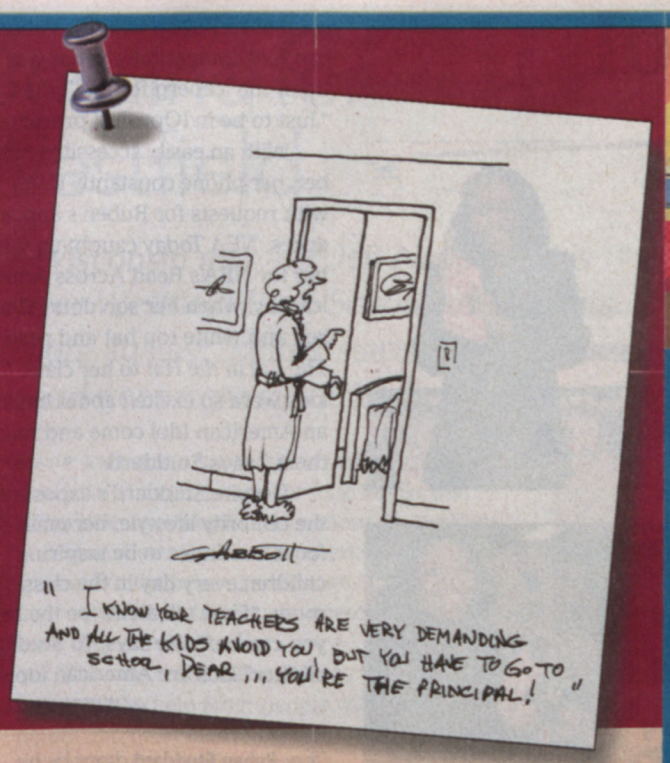


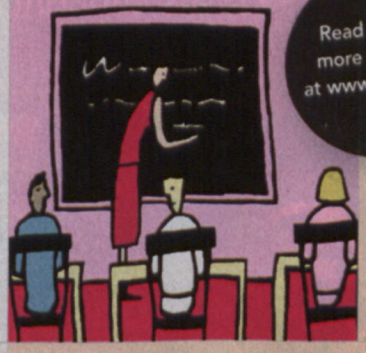
Teacher Mom

Next year, my son will be attending the middle school where I am a teacher. It is very likely he will be in some of my classes. Does anyone have suggestions?

—JULIE YATES CRAIG, *Alaska*

ANSWER: My daughter took my high school Spanish class. We decided to treat each other like any other teacher and student. But she kept calling me "Mom." I told her at home that I did not want the kids to start calling me "Mom" and she should call me "Ms. Francis" in class. The next day in class she stood up and said, "She has been my mom for 16 years and I don't want to call her 'Ms. Francis.' Are you guys OK with that?" They said, "Yes"—and no one else called me "Mom" but her.

—CANDIDA FRANCIS, *Spanish teacher, South Bend, Indiana*



Read dozens more answers at www.OWL.org

ANSWER: My son had me for seventh-grade language arts. I told him, "Never feel you have to defend me if someone says something mean. Be funny! When they say, 'Your mom is a witch!' just say, 'You don't know the half of it.'"

—LESLIE NISSEN, *Gifted education resource teacher, Savannah, Georgia*

ANSWER: My father was my math teacher in grades 8 and 9. He was the best, and I became a math teacher, too!

—PHYLLIS STERN, *Retired middle school math teacher, Edgewater Park, New Jersey*

Handling a Headache

What's the fastest way to get rid of a headache?

We asked this question in March. You answered:

Drink something with caffeine. It will help to enlarge the constricted blood vessels, allowing the blood to flow more freely, thus easing the pain. Of course, another way is to send "the headache" on an errand to the office!

—CHRISTY SCOTT, *Elementary school teacher, Westover, Maryland*

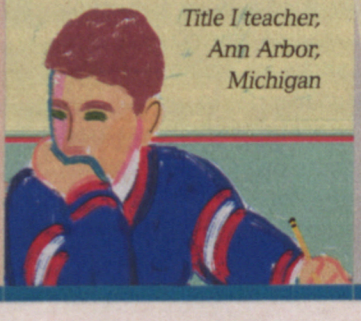
This tip comes from **a friend who studied acupuncture and acupressure.** Take the thumb and index finger of one hand and pinch or squeeze the fleshy part between the index finger and thumb of the opposite hand. Hold for a bit and the pain should begin to subside.

—SANDRA KUYPERS, *High school business teacher, Palos Hills, Illinois*

Turning on the Disengaged

Our seventh-grade students do not do homework, do not turn in classwork, and are quite apathetic. Does anyone have any suggestions for motivating these students?

—SUE KING, *Middle school Title I teacher, Ann Arbor, Michigan*



Share your wisdom, ask your question!

How do you tame a grouchy colleague?

Send your answers to this or to other questions on this page to **ajehlen@nea.org.** Or, send us a question you'd like to see posted. Please include your name, your job, and the community and state where you work.

For a weekly e-mail of questions, answers, and practical classroom tips, join Works4Me, one of NEA's most popular and useful services. Just send the message "subscribe Works4Me" (without the quotation marks) to **Lyris@list.nea.org.**

ILLUSTRATION LEFT: DIGITAL VISION/PICTUREQUEST; ILLUSTRATION RIGHT, TOP: DIGITAL VISION; ILLUSTRATION RIGHT, BOTTOM: LEVAN/BARBEE

Raising an Idol

TWO YEARS AGO, ALABAMA MEMBER Emily Studdard would never have believed she would attend the Grammy's, interview with Oprah Winfrey, or make an appearance on the *Today Show*. But ever since the second-grade teacher's son, Ruben Studdard, became *the* American Idol, her once simple life has been turned on its head. "I'm able to go places and do things I never thought I would have the chance to do," she says.

Studdard, a teacher at Chalkville Elementary School in Birmingham, Alabama, has become the unofficial liaison between the public and her son's manager. Now, besides grading papers after school, she delivers speeches, accepts awards for her son, answers his fan mail, and replies to queries on his Web site. Her most memorable experience was appearing on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* soon after Ruben won the *American Idol* competition. "That was the tip of the iceberg for me," she says. "Just to be in [Oprah's] presence."

With an easily accessible number, her phone constantly rings with requests for Ruben's appearances. *NEA Today* caught up with her for NEA's Read Across America Day, when her son donned a red and white top hat and read *The Cat in the Hat* to her class. "The kids were so excited about having an American Idol come and read to them," says Studdard.

Despite Studdard's exposure to the celebrity lifestyle, her main focus continues to be inspiring children every day in the classroom. "I just tell them, 'be the best you can be,'" she says. To Studdard, all "her" kids are American idols.

—DEITRICH CURRY

Top: **Ruben Studdard** drops by his mother's classroom on NEA's Read Across America Day. Bottom: **Emily Studdard** is all smiles during her son's visit.

Second Chance at the Game

When Deb Vosler had her leg amputated in 1991, she thought her volleyball days were over.

NOW THE MINNESOTA SCIENCE TEACHER and high school head volleyball coach has a second chance at the game. In September, Vosler will travel to Athens, Greece, to compete with the first U.S. Sitting Women's Volleyball Team in the Paralympics. "I never thought I would make it to this elite level," says Vosler. "It's awesome."

The Dover-Eyota High School teacher was invited to try out for the team two years ago, after having received her national coaching certificate. At first, she wasn't convinced the game was for her. "My heart was saying if this is not 'real' volleyball—the game I know—then I don't want to play." But Vosler tried out for the team last May and was happy she did. For her, the skills were the same, but everything moved much faster. With the net set at 41 inches, Vosler found sitting down more challenging because it was harder to react to the ball.

The U.S. team, made up of 10 women, beat Brazil in the Para American Championships to win a spot in the first Paralympics to host a women's sitting volleyball competition. Vosler is elated to be on the historic team. "I'm an athlete playing the game I love. I don't think of it as sitting on the floor. I'm playing volleyball and representing my country."

—DEITRICH CURRY

PHOTOS TOP: BUTCH DILL; BOTTOM: USA VOLLEYBALL

Bowling for Westfield

For Wisconsin member Jeff Napp and his Pioneer Westfield High School art students, the fight against hunger starts in the kiln and goes right to the kitchen.

NAPP AND HIS STUDENTS run Wisconsin School Bowls for Hunger, an annual soup dinner that raises both cash and food donations for the Care and Share Food Bank in Marquette County, Wisconsin. For the price of admission, diners enjoy their soup from a handmade, one-of-a-kind ceramic bowl they can take home.

"The kids really seem to enjoy the aspect of being able to help other people. We don't have to go out and push kids to do this," Napp says.

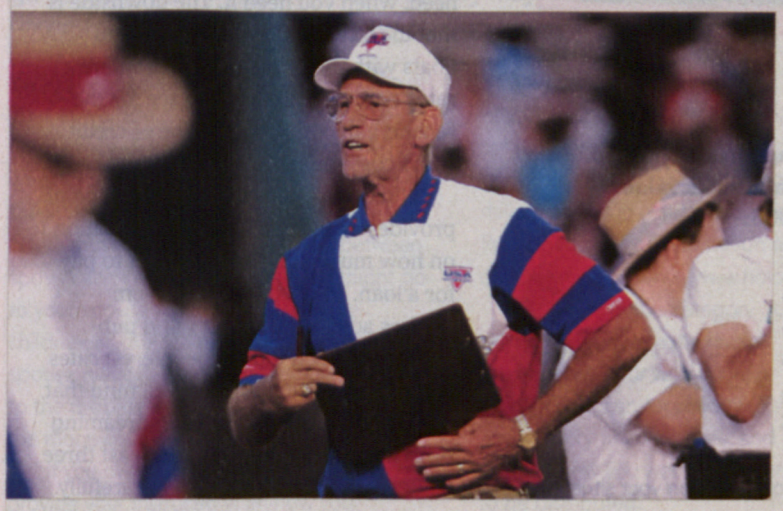
Students begin making the bowls about three weeks before the event, always held the first Monday in December, working a minimum of three hours after school, five days a week. Last year, the students turned out 1,000 bowls. A food drive competition is also held at the same time.

Last year's event raised over $6,000 and two and a half tons of nonperishable food, enough to supply the food bank for about two months. Napp estimates that in the seven years the program has been running, over 1,000 people have participated in the meal, with an average of about 100 students per year. Participants also include other Westfield staff and school board members. "Everyone gets involved," says Napp. "The entire community shows up to participate in this meal."

—CHRIS KOTTERMAN

Tracking Athletes in the Field

Jerry Jenson, an NEA-Retired member from Oregon, has collected over 200 baseball caps while volunteering as a track and field official around the world, and that count's sure to go up.



JENSON, WHO STILL THROWS SHOT PUT, discus, and hammer, began officiating when his two daughters joined their school track teams, and he's since covered events from the high school to national levels. He even volunteered at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Both Jerry and his wife, C. Ann, are USA Track & Field–Oregon certified. Although they admit officiating can sometimes be arduous (C. Ann was once stuck running the wind gauge for nine hours straight without a bathroom break), the pair gets satisfaction through companionship. "It's always a proud moment when the two of us can take the field together," Jerry says.

Officiating has taken the Jensons from Australia to Puerto Rico to Canada and back again, but no matter where they are, they try to treat the athletes as if they were at an Olympic event.

"As an official out on the field, it's easy to get emotional," Jerry says. "When you see an athlete on the field get hurt but keep going because he or she wants to finish the race, it makes it all worthwhile."

—CHERYL ROSS

GOT A TIP?

Do you have an interesting story idea? Contact Sabrina Holcomb, section editor, at **sholcomb@nea.org.**

PHOTO TOP: BECCA BLUNKET; BOTTOM: HECTOR AMEZCUA

Hammers, Saws, and Dollars

Before you launch into that big home improvement project, carefully weigh your financing options.

BY MARY ROWLAND

Spring's abloom, and that has many of us thinking about tackling big home projects—whether planting new perennials or shrubs, building a deck, or gutting the kitchen and starting afresh.

Few Americans have sufficient savings in the bank to fund a large remodeling or landscaping project, though, so most of us turn to the bank for a loan, borrowing against the value of the house itself.

Borrowing against your house makes sense for a couple of reasons: First, the interest you pay on these loans is tax deductible, unlike the interest on credit cards or consumer loans; second, if you choose your home project carefully and do a quality job, chances are good that you'll increase your home's value. (For a list of the jobs that return the most value, see "What Pays Off?")

One caveat: If you borrow against your home and fail to keep up the payments, you risk losing your house. So consider carefully how much money to take out. Be conservative.

WHAT PAYS OFF?

***Remodeling* magazine's annual survey compares the costs of home improvements with the increase each one adds to a home's value. These home projects returned the most value in 2003:**

- **DECK ADDITION** 104%
- **SIDING REPLACEMENT** 98%
- **BATHROOM ADDITION** (midrange) 95%
- **ATTIC BEDROOM** 93%
- **BATHROOM REMODEL** (upscale) 93%
- **BATHROOM REMODEL** (midrange) 89%

Check out *Remodeling's* Web site (www.remodeling.hw.net) for details on your situation.

Some banks allow homeowners who are refinancing their mortgages to increase the amount of their mortgage above what they owe and pocket the difference as cash, a practice known as **cash-out refinancing.** For example, suppose your house is worth $300,000. Your mortgage is $150,000 and you are planning to refinance at a lower rate. Many lenders will allow you to take $50,000—or even $150,000—out in additional cash when you refinance, according to Jill Holland at Hochberg Holland Mortgage Brokers in New York. However, in most cases, you will pay for that cash-out with a higher rate on the entire mortgage, she says.

Holland suggests, instead, taking a second loan against your house. These come in two flavors. The first is a **home equity loan,** akin to the old-fashioned second mortgage. With this form of loan, you borrow a specific amount of money for a fixed rate and fixed term. Disadvantages are that home equity loans can carry hefty upfront costs, including a home appraisal and title search.

The more popular choice is a **home equity line of credit,** which you draw on by check as you incur your home improvement expenses. With this option, you borrow just as much as you need, when you need it. The downside is that the interest rate you're charged floats with the prime rate. So if interest rates rise, as we're likely to see for the second half of this year, a line of credit could cost you more in interest.

HSH Associates Inc. (www.hsh.com) provides detailed, objective information on how much you should expect to pay for a loan. HSH collects data from lenders across the country and publishes it, posting mortgage interest rates daily. Before deciding who will fund that big home project you've been dreaming of, make sure to check with at least three lenders, and study their terms carefully.

ILLUSTRATION: ELSA WARNICK

Trick Yourself into Saving More

Successful savers sometimes play tricks on themselves to turn their "spending money" into "savings money." Here are a few of them:

> **PICK UP A HANDFUL OF DEPOSIT ENVELOPES** for your savings account. Every day, put aside $1, $3, or $5 into a box. Once a week—or once a month—empty the box, and drop the envelope into your bank's night depository. You may be surprised how the money adds up each year.

> **WHENEVER YOU PASS UP A MOVIE** or a cappuccino or a dinner out, put the money in your savings envelope to be deposited.

> **KEEP TRACK OF HOW MUCH YOU SPEND** each week for groceries. Then figure out how you can manage to trim that bill by $4 or $12 or $20. Whatever you save on groceries goes into your savings envelope.

> **WHEN YOU ELIMINATE A MAJOR EXPENSE**—like paying off a car—write a check to yourself for half that amount each month and put it in your savings envelope.

> **ROUND UP YOUR MORTGAGE PAYMENT** to the next $10 or $50 or $100. This saves you money in two ways. The additional payment reduces the principal and adds to equity on your home. And you are reducing future interest payments.

> **WHEN YOU'VE BUILT UP SOME MONEY** in savings, say $500, open a certificate of deposit at your bank. But keep saving!

Will Power

Three out of four Americans die without a will. Many assume their assets will go to their spouse and children. And they may. But they won't necessarily be divvied up in the way you expect.

If you die intestate—without a will—some of your assets could be frozen in probate, a court proceeding that can last for a few weeks, months, or even years, depending on the state.

In most states, property is split between spouse and children. But one-third might go to your spouse and two-thirds to your children. If your children are minors, your spouse may have to submit a yearly account to the probate court of how he or she spent the money.

If you own assets, you need a will to provide your instructions on how your property should be distributed. You can probably use a simple will, prepared with a software program, if you are under 50, in good health, and don't have more than half a million dollars in assets, according to NoLo Press, publisher of information on do-your-own legal documents (www.nolo.com).

If you are in this category, your estate will not be taxed by the federal government. Your will should name a guardian for children, list an inventory of your assets, and indicate how you would like them to be distributed.

Trim Your Car Insurance Costs

You can save on your car insurance—if you know where to look. Which of the following do you see as possibilities for saving on insurance?

1. Your car is equipped with anti-lock brakes.
2. Your teenager has just gotten a driver's license.
3. You and your spouse are over 50.
4. Your car has an anti-theft device.
5. You live in the inner city and park on the street.
6. Your teenager has completed driver's education.
7. Your teenager is in the top 20 percent of his or her class.
8. Your teenager goes to college 100 miles from home and has no car at school.
9. You park in a garage.
10. You own your home.

ITEMS 2 AND 5 WILL RAISE YOUR INSURANCE COSTS. But all the others offer options to save on insurance. If your car has special equipment that makes it safer to drive, like anti-lock brakes or running lights, or if it is protected from theft and vandalism, you can save money. Ditto if you and your spouse are over 50, have clean driving records, good credit, and demonstrate stability such as owning your home or living at the same address for several years.

Teenagers can wipe out your insurance budget. But you'll cushion the blow if your teen gets good grades, takes driver's training, or is at college without a car.

Be sure to tell your insurance agent about any of these factors that could lower your rate. While you're on the line, you may want to pare your premiums by increasing your deductible for collision coverage. Doing so means that you will pay more of the upfront costs if you have an accident. But if you're a good driver, you're betting against the odds of an accident. You can also drop collision insurance on older cars that are already paid for.

www.neamb.com

Check out the NEA Member Benefits Web site to learn more about home financing, insurance programs, and other topics. No member dues dollars are ever used to support NEA Member Benefits programs.

ILLUSTRATION: DAN YACCARINO

Your Dues Dollars

A report from NEA Secretary-Treasurer Lily Eskelsen

As NEA Secretary-Treasurer, I am pleased to report to you figures taken from NEA's audited financial statements for the fiscal and membership year ended August 31, 2003. Once again NEA experienced a positive year in 2002–03.

Lily Eskelsen

Our membership increased by an additional 27,219 members this year, and our General Operating Fund Unrestricted Net Assets increased by $3,023,692 as a result of net revenues exceeding expenses (Consolidated Net Assets increased by $13,142,385). The increase of Net Assets and continuous growth of new members add strength to our already fiscally sound organization that will enable us to build confidence in public education and to advocate for our members' needs. Each of you should be proud of your contribution in making the NEA strong and responsive to the students we serve and the people who spend their lives in public education.

The auditors' opinion letter stated that their work was performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. It was a "clean opinion" issued without any qualifying comments. An unqualified opinion is the best kind of opinion letter to receive.

The Consolidated Statements of Financial Position presents the Association's assets, liabilities and net assets as of August 31, 2003. One important indicator of an organization's financial strength is the Net Assets (the difference between total assets and total liabilities). Net Assets should be a positive balance and sufficient not only to stabilize an organization in troubled times, but also to serve as a source of funds for special projects, future growth, and other fiscal demands as deemed appropriate. NEA's consolidated Net Asset Balance is now over $96.2 million. In addition, NEA has continuously demonstrated a positive Current Ratio, which means that NEA is in a solid position to meet our current obligations by using cash and other current assets.

The General Operating Fund Statement of Activity and Changes in Net Assets reflects total Revenue and Expenses by Strategic Priorities for years 2003 and 2002.

Membership growth, fiscal stability and strength, and sound allocation of NEA's resources combined to make 2002–03 an outstanding year for the National Education Association.

NOTE: A complete copy of the NEA audit report is available upon request.

Your 2003–04 NEA DUES DOLLARS AT WORK

The chart on the opposite page shows a breakdown of how the $134.00 NEA dues dollars are allocated to support and represent members and affiliates in their efforts to achieve the mission of NEA.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

Consolidated Statements of Financial Position By Fund at August 31, 2003, with comparative totals as of August 31, 2002

	General Operating Fund	Special Purpose Funds	Capital Improvement Fund	Consolidating Entries	2003 Total Funds	2002 Total Funds
Current Assets	$ 60,277,395	$ 24,366,856	$ —	$ (815,752)	$ 83,828,499	$ 72,910,073
Long-term Assets	26,546,538	15,329,366	49,488,397	(7,954,304)	83,409,997	88,024,212
Total Assets	$ 86,823,933	$ 39,696,222	$ 49,488,397	$ (8,770,056)	$ 167,238,496	$ 160,934,285
Current Liabilities	$ 19,954,059	$ 5,895,786	$ 2,928,183	$ (815,752)	$ 27,962,276	$ 32,067,958
Long-term Liabilities	6,489,625	10,616,792	28,155,985	(2,234,383)	43,028,019	45,760,511
Total Liabilities	26,443,684	16,512,578	31,084,168	(3,050,135)	70,990,295	77,828,469
Unrestricted Net Assets						
Undesignated Net Assets	46,804,552	23,183,644	18,404,229	(5,719,921)	82,672,504	64,255,915
Net Assets Designated for Postretirement Benefits	13,575,697	—	—	—	13,575,697	18,849,901
Total Unrestricted Net Assets	60,380,249	23,183,644	18,404,229	(5,719,921)	96,248,201	83,105,816
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	$ 86,823,933	$ 39,696,222	$ 49,488,397	$ (8,770,056)	$ 167,238,496	$ 160,934,285

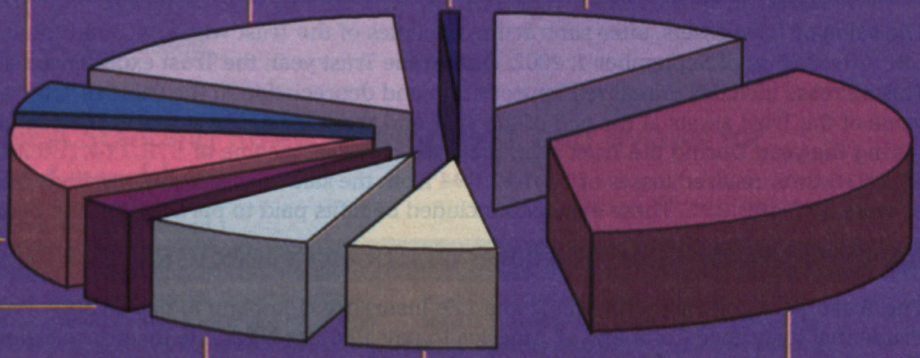
$7.16 Governance
Implement an inclusive, engaged governance process that fosters member participation and democratic decision-making through such avenues as the Representative Assembly, NEA Board, NEA Executive Committee, and NEA committees and task forces.

$22.09 Administrative Support
Provide a facility that includes technology infrastructure, financial services, facilities services, and human resources to serve the needs of affiliates and members.

$1.19 Contingency
Provide funding for emergencies at the national, state, or local levels.

$14.99 Improve Teaching & Learning
Advocate for qualified teachers and support professionals in every classroom and worksite; provide strategies for school improvement and raise student achievement through early childhood education, teacher preparation, certification and development, and research and documentation on testing and accountability.

$15.40 Legal Support
Implement advocacy programs for members including the Unified Legal Services Program, Fidelity Bond, Association Leaders liability insurance, and a one million dollar member liability insurance program.



$3.84 Leadership Development and Constituency Support
Provide for Regional Leadership Conferences, Minority and Women's Leadership Training, support for councils including NCUEA, ESP, Higher Education, NEA-Retired, and the NEA Student Program.

$10.96 Legislative and Ballot Initiative Action
Build bipartisan support for public education that includes lobbying, government relations, a state ballot initiative and legislative crises fund, cyber lobbyists, members' education, and mobilization on political issues.

$9.03 Partnerships and Public Relations
Establish new partnerships with diverse supportive organizations and businesses and outreach to family-community organizations and to minority communities. Establish NEA's public image as an advocate for great public schools through TV, radio, print, and cyber news.

$49.34 Support Strong States & Locals To Protect Member Interests
Support the UniServ program, affiliate project and assistance grants, bargaining training and research on salary and benefits issues, and compensation database technology. Recruit and retain members in all categories and produce communications for members and leaders.

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

General Operating Fund — Comparative Statement of Activity and Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended August 31, 2003 and 2002

	2003	2002
Total Revenue	$ 273,642,608	$ 261,343,513
Expenses By Strategic Priorities:		
Student Achievement — Provide students with the skills and knowledge to function successfully in school	4,087,318	4,620,085
Teacher Quality — Ensure a qualified teacher in every classroom	5,414,486	4,311,032
Education Support Professional Quality — Ensuring qualified education support professionals in the classroom and at worksites	3,607,113	—
School System Capacity — Build learning environments that support student success	6,276,911	6,685,347
Public, Parental, and Business Support — Promote stronger public, parental, and business support for public education	42,971,818	35,944,568
Association Capacity Building — Mobilize at the local, state, and national levels for the resources basic to quality schools	126,881,930	121,318,441
Administrative Services & Program Support — Provide the administrative and programmatic support vital to the achievement of NEA's goals	81,379,340	87,118,046
Total Unrestricted Expenses	270,618,916	259,997,519
Changes in Net Assets from Operating Activities	3,023,692	1,345,994
Unrestricted Net Assets, Beginning of Year	57,356,557	56,010,563
Unrestricted Net Assets, End of Year	$ 60,380,249	$ 57,356,557

NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST PLAN
2002 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT
(Trust Plan Year Beginning September 1, 2002)

The following is the summary annual report for the NEA Members Insurance Trust® Plan (Trust), Employer Identification Number 52-1126682, including information for NEA Life Insurance® Program, NEA Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance Program, NEA DUES-TAB®, and NEA MemberCare® Medicare Supplement Program for period beginning September 1, 2002, and ending August 31, 2003. The annual report has been filed with the Internal Revenue Service, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

BASIC NEA MEMBERS INSURANCE TRUST FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The value of Trust assets, after subtracting liabilities of the Trust was **$84,368,622** as of August 31, 2003, compared to **$80,064,357** as of September 1, 2002. During the Trust year, the Trust experienced an increase in its net assets of **$4,304,265.** This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of Trust assets; that is, the difference between the value of the Trust assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the Trust year, the Trust had total income of **$76,714,186** including participant contributions of **$65,916,860,** realized losses of **$6,147,094** from the sale of assets, and earnings from investments of **$4,725,973.** Trust expenses were **$72,409,921.** These expenses included benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, administrative and other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA LIFE INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with Minnesota Life Insurance Company to pay all NEA Preferred Term Life Insurance claims and The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all other NEA Life Insurance claims incurred under the terms of this program. The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2002, and ending August 31, 2003, were **$35,646,084.**

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2003, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **$35,646,084** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$32,610,178.**

INFORMATION FOR NEA ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT (AD&D) PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA AD&D claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 2002, and ending August 31, 2003, were **$2,722,895.**

Because it is a so called "experienced rated" contract, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2003, the contributions made under such "experienced-rated" contract were **$2,722,895** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$2,190,140.**

INFORMATION FOR NEA DUES-TAB PROGRAM

The Trust has a contract with The Prudential Insurance Company of America to pay all NEA DUES-TAB claims incurred under the terms of the Trust. The NEA DUES-TAB program is self-supporting and paid by premiums from the NEA Members Insurance Trust funds rather than from Member contributions. The total contributions for the Trust year beginning September 1, 2002, and ending August 31, 2003, were **$1,810,000.**

Of the total contributions made for the Trust year ending August 31, 2003, the contributions made were **$1,810,000** and the total of all benefit claims paid under the contract during the Trust year was **$1,697,278.** Benefits charged, less benefit claims paid, were **$134,495,** which is comprised of incurred but unreported claims and a pooled claim charge. Trust expenses, less benefit claims paid, were **$50,696** in premium taxes and **$148,521** in other expenses.

INFORMATION FOR NEA MEMBERCARE MEDICARE SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM

The total contributions for the Trust plan year beginning September 1, 2002, and ending August 31, 2003, were **$8,363,900.** The total number of participants was **5,897.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As a participant, you have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof for a reasonable charge or you may inspect the Annual Report without charge at the office of NEA Members Insurance Trust, c/o NEA Member Benefits, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 or at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C. You also have the right to receive from the Trust Administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the Trust and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the Trust and accompanying notes, or both. The Administrator will state the charge, if any, of the specific document you request so you can find out the cost before ordering.

NEA Members Insurance Trust®

The 2004 NEA Representative Assembly

This July, more than 9,000 NEA members elected by their state and local colleagues will gather in Washington, D.C., for the annual NEA Representative Assembly (RA), July 4–7. The RA is the Association's highest decision-making body. Delegates will be voting on the proposed amendments listed below, as well as electing three members of the Executive Committee. You can follow the RA action by going online to www.nea.org. On the Web site will be day-to-day coverage of RA debates and action, plus text versions of major RA addresses.

Proposed Amendments to the NEA Standing Rules, Constitution, and Bylaws for vote by the 2004 Representative Assembly.

Proposed deletions are shown in [ ]; proposed additions are underscored.

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To require that discussion on items debated by the Representative Assembly appear on video display screens and television monitors via real-time captioning.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate
(no section given)

The content of debate on any items for debate shall be displayed on all available screens by real-time captioning.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would add a requirement to Standing Rule 6 that "the content of debate" on any items being debated by the Representative Assembly be shown via real-time captioning on the overhead video screens and on all television monitors that display the proceedings of the Representative Assembly. Items debated on the floor of the Representative Assembly include proposed amendments to the NEA Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules; new business items; the Legislative Program; NEA resolutions; and policy statements. Other Representative Assembly business not debated, such as addresses, committee reports, presentations by guests, and observances, would not be subject to this requirement. According to the sponsor, the amendment is intended to better allow hearing-impaired and deaf delegates to follow debate. The sponsor intends "real-time captioning" to function as it does for captioned television programs.

Currently some text, including print versions of amendments or other language introduced on the Representative Assembly floor that cannot be reviewed in writing beforehand, is displayed to delegates on the video screens and monitors for brief periods. NEA Conference and Facilities Management (CFM) provides enhanced audio via closed circuit earphones for delegates with hearing impairments and via sign language interpreters for those with profound impairments or total hearing loss. As many delegates view the Representative Assembly proceedings on 27-inch television monitors closest to their delegation rather than on the larger video screens, the ability of all delegates to adequately view captions on these monitors may be limited.

According to CFM, depending on whether the captioning is performed from a remote location or at the Representative Assembly site, implementation of this amendment would necessitate the purchase of equipment and services costing between $10,000 and $20,000. This estimate includes the cost of hiring at least two specially trained typists to type the captions that would appear on the video screens and monitors.

Contact Person: Terri Zumbrook, Illinois

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To limit debate on all items considered by the Representative Assembly to four (4) speakers for, four (4) speakers against, and three (3) points of information; to limit points of inquiry and parliamentary procedure to questions germane to the motion under debate.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate

D. Any delegate who is recognized by the chair shall give his/her name and state, and shall indicate whether speaking as an individual or as spokesperson for the state delegation or the NEA Board of Directors before speaking to a point under discussion. No member shall speak and/or be recognized in debate more than twice to the same question during the same meeting, nor longer than two (2) minutes at one time if speaking as an individual or three (3) minutes at one time if speaking for the delegation or the NEA Board of Directors, unless permission is granted by majority vote of the Representative Assembly.

Debate on all items brought before the Representative Assembly shall be limited to four (4) speeches in favor and four (4) speeches opposed to the item. If there are not four (4) speakers on each side of an issue, the chair shall close debate and place the question before the Assembly.

Points of inquiry and parliamentary procedure shall be limited to questions germane to the motion under debate. The chair shall inquire whether the point of inquiry or parliamentary procedure concerns the question before the Assembly. Questions not germane to the motion on the floor shall be deferred until the Assembly has acted. At that point, those questions shall be answered before proceeding to the next item of business. Three (3) points of information/inquiry shall be allowed per business item.

With the consent of the Representative Assembly, an NEA member who is not a delegate may address the Assembly.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

During Representative Assembly debate, the current practice is for the presiding officer to recognize in rotating order delegates speaking for and against the item on the floor until there are no further requests to speak to the item or until the Assembly votes to close debate. If all the delegates wishing to speak are on the same side of the item, the presiding officer will recognize several delegates and then, without objection, close debate. This amendment would limit debate on all items before the Representative Assembly to four speakers for, four speakers against, and three points of information. Although a literal reading of the language of the amendment might suggest otherwise, the Committee, after consulting with the maker, does not interpret the amendment to require the chair to immediately close debate without calling on any speakers "[i]f there are not four (4) speakers on each side of the issue." If four speakers have not requested to speak for and/or against the item, the presiding officer would recognize those who have requested to speak (up to the limit of four on each side of the item) and close debate. The Representative Assembly then would vote on the item in question.

The amendment also would limit points of inquiry and parliamentary procedure to those "germane" to the item on the floor. A definition of the term "germane" would have to be developed to ensure consistent application of this limitation.

Contact Person: Dennis Crupper, Michigan

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To delete Standing Rule 6.M, which permits new business related to procedural operations of the Representative Assembly to be introduced and acted upon before the close of each business meeting.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate

[**M.** New business relating to the procedural operations of the Representative Assembly may be introduced and acted upon prior to the close of each business meeting.]

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would delete Standing Rule 6.M, which provides that new business related to procedural operations of the Representative Assembly may be introduced and acted upon before the close of each business meeting.

Standing Rule 6.K requires that all new business items be submitted by 12:00 noon on the second day of the Representative Assembly. This provision conflicts with Standing Rule 6.M which is, in practice, not complied with.

Contact Person: Don Schulte, Missouri

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 4

TITLE: To delete Standing Rule 6.U, which states that a motion to object to consideration of an item is in order only immediately after the maker of the original motion has had the opportunity to speak to the original motion.

Rule 6. Order of Business and Debate

[**U.** *The object to consideration motion* shall be in order only immediately after the maker of the motion has had the opportunity to speak to it.]

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would delete Standing Rule 6.U, which provides that a motion to object to the consideration of a motion before the Representative Assembly is in order only immediately after the sponsor of the original motion has had the opportunity to speak to his or her motion. Standing Rule 6.U is contrary to *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, which provides that once a motion to object is made, the Assembly must move immediately to a vote on whether or not the motion objected to will be considered. Under *Robert's* the maker of the original motion is not permitted to speak to the original motion before the vote on whether or not it will be considered. This inconsistency between Standing Rule 6.U and *Robert's* is allowable, because Bylaw 13-1 provides that *Robert's* "shall be the authority in all matters of procedure at the NEA Representative Assembly . . . *except as otherwise specified in the Charter, the Constitution, these Bylaws, or the Standing Rules.*" If this amendment is adopted—and the Standing Rule 6.U exception to *Robert's* is deleted—object to consideration motions would be dealt with in accordance with *Robert's*.

Contact Person: Barbara Wilmarth, Florida

STANDING RULE AMENDMENT 5

TITLE: To require that the rationales submitted by the makers of proposed amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules be added to the information that is printed in an official NEA publication sent to all members at least sixty days before their consideration; to require that the information provided for proposed amendments to the Constitution is the same as the information provided for proposed amendments to the Bylaws and Standing Rules; to remove redundant language regarding proposed amendments to the Bylaws.

Rule 11. Constitution, Bylaws, and Standing Rules: Committee and Amendment Procedures

C. Constitution and Bylaws

1. Constitution

(b.) *Printing and Distribution:* The Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules shall arrange proposed amendments to the Constitution so that they are sequential by article of the Constitution. Titles and texts of proposed amendments to the Constitution along with the name and state of the contact person shall be available upon request to any NEA member no later than ninety (90) days following the adjournment of the Representative Assembly. The text of the proposed amendments and their rationales, along with the name and state of the contact person shall be printed in an official publication sent to all members at least sixty (60) days prior to its consideration.

2. Bylaws: Proposed amendments to the Bylaws shall be submitted to the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules in writing and in accordance with Article IX, Sections 1 and 3 of the Constitution. Documentation of timely submission shall be the responsibility of the contact person for the amendment.

[**a.** *Publication:* These amendments shall be printed in an official publication sent to all members at least sixty (60) days prior to their consideration.]

[**b.**] *Printing and Distribution:* The Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules shall arrange proposed amendments to the Bylaws sequentially by bylaw. The text of proposed amendments to the Bylaws and their rationales, along with the name and state of the contact person, shall be printed in an official publication sent to all members at least sixty (60) days prior to its consideration.

D. Standing Rules

2. *Time for Submission and Notice:* (a) A proposed amendment to the Standing Rules shall be presented in writing to the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules, postmarked no later than one hundred twenty (120) days preceding the Annual Meeting. (b) Documentation of timely submission shall be the responsibility of the contact person for the amendment. (c) The text of the proposed amendment and the rationale, along with the name and state of the contact person shall be printed in an official publication sent to all members at least sixty (60) days prior to its consideration. (d) The Standing Rules may then be amended by the Representative Assembly by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting, by voice vote.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Standing Rule 11 currently provides that the text of proposed amendments to the Constitution (Section C.1.), and the Bylaws (Section C.2.), and the Standing Rules (Section D.2.) be printed in an official publication sent to all members at least sixty days before consideration. This amendment would make three changes in Standing Rule 11—one is substantive and the other two are editorial. The substantive change would require that the rationale that the maker submits along with his or her proposed amendment be included in the official publication sent to all members. The editorial changes would (1) require that the name and state of the contact person for proposed amendments to the Constitution also be included in the official publication, which is now required for proposed amendments to the Bylaws and Standing Rules and (2) delete current Section C.2.a. because it is redundant in light of Section C.2.b.

Contact Person: Tay McArthur, California

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To specify that the time of submission of amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws submitted by the NEA Board of Directors be considered to be the time at which the amendments are approved by the Board.

Article IX. Amendment of Constitution and Bylaws

Section 2. Amendment of the Constitution

a. A proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be presented in writing to the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules and read by title to the Annual Meeting immediately prior to its proposed adoption. Documentation of timely submission of an amendment shall be the responsibility of the contact person for the amendment [.] , provided that the time of submission of an amendment that is proposed by a majority vote of the NEA Board of Directors shall be when the language of the amendment is approved by the Board of Directors.

b. The text of the proposed amendment shall be printed in an official publication sent to all members at least sixty (60) days prior to its consideration.

c. The Constitution may then be amended at the Annual Meeting by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of delegates present and voting.

Section 3. Amendment of the Bylaws

a. A proposed amendment to the Bylaws shall be presented in writing to the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules, postmarked no later than one hundred twenty (120) days preceding the Annual Meeting. Documentation of timely submission of an amendment shall be the responsibility of the contact person for the amendment [.] , provided that the time of submission of an amendment that is proposed by a majority vote of the NEA Board of Directors shall be when the language of the amendment is approved by the Board of Directors.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

Currently, an amendment to the NEA Constitution or Bylaws—whether proposed by at least one hundred (100) Active members from two (2) or more states, at least fifty (50) certified delegates to the NEA Representative Assembly, a majority vote of at least two (2) state delegations to the Representative Assembly, a majority vote of the NEA Board of Directors, or a majority vote of the Committee on Constitution, Bylaws, and Rules (CCBR)—is considered submitted at the time it is received in written form by the CCBR. This amendment would make the submission time for amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws proposed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors the time when the amendments are approved by the Board, rather than the time when the proposed amendments are received in written form by the CCBR.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 1

TITLE: To establish dues for NEA Active members employed for seventy-five percent (75%) or less but more than fifty percent (50%) of the normal schedule for a full-time employee at three-quarters (3/4) of the regular dues for Active members in their job category.

2-7. Membership Dues

d. The membership fee for persons eligible for Active membership who are regularly employed for seventy-five (75) percent or less, but greater than fifty (50) percent, of the normal schedule for a full-time employee, who are not employed as substitutes, and who are not eligible for membership as a full-time employee through another local association (as verified by the local association) shall be three-quarters (3/4) of the Active dues, as appropriate. The membership fee for persons eligible for Active membership who are regularly employed for fifty (50) percent or less, but greater than twenty-five (25) percent, of the normal schedule for a full-time employee, who are not employed as substitutes, and who are not eligible for membership as a full-time employee through another local association (as verified by the local association) shall be one-half (1/2) of the Active dues, as appropriate. The membership fee for persons eligible for Active membership who are regularly employed for twenty-five (25) percent or less of the normal schedule for a full-time employee, who are not employed as substitutes and who are not eligible for membership as a full-time or part-time employee through another local association (as verified by the local association) shall be one-quarter (1/4) of the Active dues, as appropriate.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would create a new level of dues for NEA Active members who are regularly employed for seventy-five percent (75%) or less, but greater than fifty percent (50%) of the normal schedule for a full-time employee. The dues for these members would be three-quarters (3/4) of the regular dues for NEA Active members in their job category — *i.e.*, professional

education employees or education support professionals. This dues arrangement would be implemented in the same manner as the two other special dues arrangements already provided for in Bylaw 2-7(d).

Identical amendments were defeated by the Representative Assembly in 2001 and 2002.

Contact Person: Steven Cook, Michigan

BYLAW AMENDMENT 2

TITLE: To make permanent the dues increase allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund.

2-7. Membership Dues

n. [Beginning with the 2000-01 membership year and continuing through the 2004-05 membership year, t] The annual membership dues of Active members of the Association, as computed pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.a, shall be increased by five dollars ($5.00), and the annual membership dues of Student members of the Association shall be increased by one-dollar ($1.00). This dues increase shall be allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund.

Sixty percent (60%) of the money allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund during each membership year shall be available to assist state affiliates in dealing with ballot measures and legislative crises, and forty percent (40%) shall be available for national and state media campaigns to advance the cause of public education and to publicize the role of the Association and its affiliates in improving the quality of public education.

(no further changes)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

The 2000 NEA Representative Assembly amended Bylaw 2-7 by adding a new Section n, which increased the annual membership dues of Active members of NEA by five dollars and Student members of NEA by one dollar, and allocated this dues increase to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund. The 2000 amendment included a "sunset" provision, which provided that this dues increase would continue only through the 2004-05 membership year. This amendment would delete the sunset provision, and make the dues increase permanent, but it would not change the amount of the dues increase. (Compare Bylaw Amendment 3.).

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 3

TITLE: To make permanent the dues increase allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund and to raise the amount of the dues increase for Active members of NEA by one dollar each year beginning with the 2005-06 membership year until the amount reaches 10 dollars.

2-7. Membership Dues

n. [Beginning with the 2000-01 membership year and continuing through the 2004-05 membership year, [t] The annual membership dues of Active members of the Association, as computed pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.a, shall be increased by five dollars ($5.00), and the annual membership dues of Student members of the Association shall be increased by one dollar ($1.00) through the 2004-05 membership year. The annual membership dues of Active members, as computed pursuant to Bylaw 2-7.a, shall be increased by six dollars ($6.00) during the 2005-06 membership year, by seven dollars ($7.00) during the 2006-07 membership year, by eight dollars ($8.00) during the 2007-08 membership year, by nine dollars ($9.00) during the 2008-09 membership year, and by ten dollars ($10.00) during each membership year thereafter. The increase in the annual membership dues of Student members shall remain at one dollar ($1.00). This dues increase shall be allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund.

Sixty percent (60%) of the money allocated to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund during each membership year shall be available to assist state affiliates in dealing with ballot measures and legislative crises, and forty percent (40%) shall be available for national and state media campaigns to advance the cause of public education and publicize the role of the Association and its affiliates in improving the quality of public education.

(no further changes)

IMPACT STATEMENT:

The 2000 NEA Representative Assembly amended Bylaw 2-7 by adding a new Section n, which increased the annual membership dues of Active members of NEA by five dollars and Student members of NEA by one dollar and allocated this dues increase to the Ballot Measure/Legislative Crises and Media Campaign Fund. The 2000 amendment included a sunset provision, which provides that this dues increase would continue only through the 2004-05 membership year.

This amendment would delete the sunset provision and make the dues increase permanent. It would, in addition, increase the amount of the dues increase for Active members of NEA by one dollar each year, beginning with the 2005-06 membership year, until it reaches 10 dollars during the 2009-10 membership year, and it would remain at that amount during subsequent membership years. The dues increase for Student members of NEA would remain at one dollar.

Contact: NEA Board of Directors

BYLAW AMENDMENT 4

TITLE: To prohibit lobbying regarding and the solicitation of signatures on petitions for new business items in the polling area and voting lines during voting.

3. Representative Assembly

(new) 3-15. Voting

No lobbying or signing of new business items can be conducted in the polling area and voting lines during voting.

IMPACT STATEMENT:

This amendment would prohibit lobbying regarding new business items and soliciting signatures on petitions for new business items in the polling area while voting is taking place, including particularly among delegates who are in line waiting to vote.

Contact Person: Joyce-Roberta Miller-Alper, Texas

Candidates Running for NEA Executive Committee

CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR THREE-YEAR TERM (ELECT TWO):

MICHAEL MARKS

Now more than ever, America's public schools need the help of caring individuals to ensure that no child is left behind. Good leadership is a must if the National Education Association is to remain a united and focused vanguard for public education. As we evaluate student achievement, as we promote teacher quality, as we analyze organizational capacity, we must insist that NEA continue to make the grade! It is with great public schools for every child in mind that we must continue to forge toward new horizons. NEA needs the help of every member in securing the highest marks for NEA and America's public schools.

BECKY PRINGLE

As I seek re-election to the NEA Executive Committee, my vision continues to be that the NEA, with the collective determination of 2.7 million members will realize its fullest potential—WILL direct the course of public education, WILL be the respected voice we can and should be, WILL demonstrate that we can fight to protect and enhance the rights of our members while we fight to ensure that every child has the quality education they deserve.

"Advancing public education through advocacy," continues to be my theme. Advocacy, be it for the welfare of children, better working conditions and wages, or our right to participate in the political process...advocacy, followed by action, is how we will meet the challenges facing us today, and awaiting us tomorrow.

CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR TWO-YEAR TERM (ELECT ONE):

MARK CEBULSKI

As members of the NEA, we have reached a turning point in our history. We are being challenged both internally to meet growing needs with diminishing resources, and to fight external forces aiming to undermine us.

We must garner our own rich resources—our creativity, our activism, our passion and our energy—to step up to these challenges. NEA's commitment to democracy and educational progress will be measured by how well these resources will be utilized.

Input is needed from all our many diverse constituencies—support staff professionals and teachers, state and local affiliates, and ethnic and special interest groups—to meet and overcome these challenges and to keep us advocating successfully for great public schools and human and civil rights.

ROSEMARY RILEY

An Executive Committee member must have extensive, organizational leadership experience to be an integral part of "Team NEA." Changing the political climate and ensuring that public education is at the forefront of our national and state agendas is vital for the future of this country.

NEA officers must collaborate with national, state, and local leaders to organize and serve the diverse needs of our members and our students. Every student must have equal access to a quality public education and every member must have the support and respect to accomplish this goal. NEA must elect passionate and committed leaders to be a "voice for one, and a voice for all."

resources

52 **Grants and Awards** Get a head start on the next school year with NEA Foundation grants.
53 **Take Note** Celebrate Teacher Day on May 4.
55 **Diversity Calendar** Celebrate the collective accomplishments of Asian Pacific Americans.
55 **Make a Difference** Read up on the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education.
56 **In Print** Two books walk you through grading and assessing students with special needs.
56 **OWL.org** Thinking of professional development this summer? Check out www.owl.org.
57 **On TV** Talking to students in Iraq, examining obesity in children, and more.
59 **Books by NEA Members** E-teaching—creating Web sites and student portfolios.
60 **On the Web** An FCIC site helps students become more savvy consumers.
61 **NEA's Read Across America** Get ready to read with a hero.
62 **Heads Up From NEA Member Benefits** A plan to pay for the hidden costs of hospitalization.
62 **What's Up at HIN** Making the workplace safe for everyone; NEA scores a win for gun safety.

The NEA Foundation's June and September Grants

What creative ideas would you like to try in the classroom? How can you and your colleagues grow professionally?

Whatever your needs might be, The NEA Foundation's *Innovation and Learning & Leadership Grants* can help. Even though the school year is coming to a close, there's still time to get your application in by the **June 1** review date. Or, if you're already looking ahead, the first review date of the new school year is **September 15.**

Applications are accepted on an **ongoing, year-round basis,** so it's never too late to apply. Grants fund activities for 12 months from the award date. NEA members just like you have applied for and received over a thousand grants throughout the years. Read about their projects at www.neafoundation.org, and then submit your own idea. *Innovation Grants and Learning & Leadership Grants* are available for all subjects, including the arts, literacy, science, and technology.

All members who are practicing public school teachers in grades K–12, education support professionals, or higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are encouraged to apply. We now offer **bigger and better grants—up to $5,000** per project—to fund your BIG ideas.

THE NEA FOUNDATION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT of EDUCATION
www.nfie.org

Applying for a grant is easy, so why wait? Visit www.neafoundation.org today for more information, including guidelines and an application, or call 202-822-7840.

MONTH OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT ART CONTEST

The National Middle School Association is seeking student artwork and writing for a 2004 Month of the Young Adolescent celebration. Art entries will be used on the group's poster and bookmark and winning essays will be featured in their online publication *Expressions from the Middle,* which features original artwork, short essays, and poems written by young adolescents (ages 10–15). To enter, artists must create an original piece that represents the theme "Expressions from the Middle," while writers should submit an original short essay or poem in less than 500 words using one of four provided topics.

Artwork used on the 2004 Month of the Young Adolescent poster will receive a $100 cash prize and entries selected to appear in the electronic publication will receive a $25 cash prize. For more information, visit www.nmsa.org or call 800-528-NSNA. The deadline for entries is June 4, 2004.

COMMUNITY GRANTS FROM TARGET

Target offers grants ranging from $1,000 to $3,000 to community groups and schools in the areas of the arts, early childhood reading, and family violence prevention. Grant applications will be accepted at all Target stores between March 1 and May 31, 2004 (applications will be released starting March 1). Applications are reviewed as they are received and all funding decisions will be communicated no later than September 30, 2004. For more information, visit http://target.com/target_

group/community_giving/index.jhtml.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY TEACHER GRANTS

The National Geographic Society Education Foundation awards teachers grants to facilitate their work in the classroom, school, district, and community. Projects with an emphasis on cultural connections and that promote understanding of and respect for differences between cultures, as well as exploration of students' own heritage are preferred.

The Foundation encourages high-impact projects that engage students and encourage them to understand the power and relevancy of geographic skills, the uses of geography, and a spatial perspective. Teacher Grant applications are accepted in the spring from any current teacher or administrator in an accredited K–12 school within the United States or Canada.

Applications for the 2004–05 school year or summer 2005 must be received by close of business (5 p.m. ET) June 10, 2004. Awards will be announced by August 31, 2004. For more, go to http://nationalgeographic.com/education/teacher_community/get_grant.html.

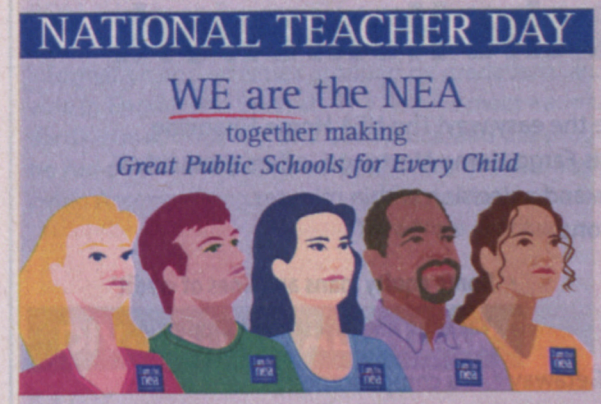
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S FUNDING FORECAST

If you've applied for a grant from the Department of Education, or are just thinking about applying, you might want to check out www.ed.gov/fund/grant/find/edlite-forecast.html. This site lists virtually all programs and competitions under which the Department of Education has invited or expects to invite applications for new awards for FY 2004 and provides actual or estimated deadline dates for the transmittal of applications under these programs. The list consists of charts, organized according to the Department's principal program offices.

Note: The document is advisory only and is not an official application notice of the Department of Education. Updates will be provided to this document through July 2004.

Take Note

NEA Members Celebrate Teacher Day



On May 4, 2004, teachers across the country get their day to shine as America celebrates National Teacher Day, the annual recognition of teachers' dedication to educating the nation's children. Celebrated on the Tuesday of Teacher Appreciation Week (May 2–8), this year's National Teacher Day theme, "We are the NEA—Together Making Great Public Schools for Every Child," is more focused on NEA members than ever before. Why? Because teachers are true heroes in our communities, who through their commitment to children, work millions of small miracles every day. And the vast majority of teachers in the United States are NEA members, proud to be advocates for children, public education, and their profession.

To celebrate this year's event with gusto, check out www.nea.org/teacherday. There you'll find this year's poster, a brief history of Teacher Day, suggested activities, and resources for those considering entering this worthy profession.

Reducing Class Size: A First Step

Educators know that smaller class sizes mean higher quality education, but how do you convince politicians of this all-important truth? The first step is **gathering accurate data.** In October 2003, NEA began requesting class size information from State Departments of Education, but this data collection is a new effort for many states. In order to collect, store, and disseminate "actual" class-size data—not just misleading pupil-teacher ratios—states may have to implement a data collection process requiring new computer software development, data collection scheduling, and minimal training of staff. A starting point for this process would be for state boards and legislatures to enact legislation authorizing collection of actual class size data.

What can you do to ensure that this happens?

- Contact your local and state school board representatives and legislators to let them know how important it is to develop a systematic way to capture actual class-size data throughout each state. This data would be reported to NEA each December, showing actual class sizes as of October 1 each year.
- Encourage legislators to draft legislation for accurate data collection. Legislation might read: "The state department of education of _____ shall collect class size data annually using the designated form [found at www.nea.org/classsize/datacollection.html] and report such information to the Legislature no later than December 1 of each year. This statute shall be in full force and effect upon publication."

FOR MORE, contact Helen Pate-Bain at 251-540-7012, hpbain@gultel.com or Helen Wise at 814-422-8207, how1@psu.edu, or visit the Reduce Class Size Now Web site at www.reduceclasssizenow.org/.

Take Note *continues on next page*

Take Note *continued*

Live Webcast on the Brown v. Board of Education 50th Anniversary

On Monday, May 17, at 12 p.m., ET, NEA invites educators and students to watch a live Webcast on Court TV, a special 90-minute commemoration of the historic Supreme Court Decision, broadcast from Topeka, Kansas. Classrooms and schools nationwide are encouraged to log on to www.courttv.com/brown to see the programs that include:

- interviews with education and government leaders—including NEA President Reg Weaver and Cheryl Brown Henderson, as well as actor Ossie Davis, among others
- a historical look at the legal proceedings, including taped interviews with individuals who played a key role in shaping the class-action suits, such as the Honorable Robert Carter
- a moderated discussion between students and high-ranking officials about the history of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the current state of public education, and solutions for closing the achievement and financial gaps.

Court TV will provide links to *Brown v. Board of Education* educational resources and will make 30- and 60-second interviews available for use in classrooms. Go to www.courttv.com/brown for more information and to find out how to access the Webcast.

Technology in Education: What Do the Candidates Think?

As an education employee, you know the value of having up-to-date technology in schools. As a voter, it's up to you to help find out what this year's candidates think about this critical issue. How do you do that—and also raise the visibility of education technology in this election cycle? Start by visiting www.nctet.org, the Web site of the National Coalition for Technology in Education and Training, a nonpartisan coalition of education organizations and technology companies. The site offers suggestions on how to best contact candidates, a sample letter you can send to candidates, and supporting resources that demonstrate the effectiveness of technology in raising student achievement.

"Athough recent efforts have significantly raised the level of technology access in our schools," says NEA staffer and NCTET board member Barbara Stein, "many classrooms still appear to be relics of previous eras. All of our students deserve access to the tools that will help them succeed in this century."

Home Financing Without the Homework

Now you can buy or refinance a home the easy way! The NEA Home Financing Program®, provided exclusively by Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, offers great rates, exceptional service, a quick application and a decision within minutes. Take advantage of a wide array of options:

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Home Equity: Mon. – Fri., 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., ET

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NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION nea Of The United States

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NEA HOME FINANCING PROGRAM® ... HELPING TO MAKE DREAMS AFFORDABLE.

[1] Home equity financing provided by Wells Fargo Banks. Members FDIC. ©2004 Wells Fargo Banks. All Rights Reserved. **Home equity lines of credit secured by homestead properties are not available in Texas.** [2] **Transportation not included with the getaway.** Offer valid for new purchase or refinance mortgage loan applications taken and closed through June 30, 2004 through this program. This offer is available for first mortgages through Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and not available on home equity loans and lines of credit and cannot be combined with any other program or offer. Contact your mortgage consultant for additional details, terms and conditions. The offer is administered by BI, which is not affiliated with Wells Fargo Home Mortgage and is subject to change without notice. The benefits of the **NEA Home Financing Program®** cannot be combined with any other offer. NEA Home Financing Program is a registered mark and NEA Getaway is a service mark of NEA's Member Benefits Corp. Information is accurate through May 7, 2004. To find out what may have changed, please contact Wells Fargo Home Mortgage. Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. originates mortgage loans in New Hampshire under License No. 5757 MB and is a New Jersey Department of Banking Licensed Mortgage Banker. ©2004 Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Information is accurate as of date of printing and is subject to change without notice. Credit subject to approval. 5/04 **Branches DM# DMCNEAHOTEL**

HFNT0504 EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

ILLUSTRATION TOP: LEVAN/BARBEE STUDIO

Threshold Magazine

NEA collaborated with Cable In the Classroom to produce the spring issue of CIC's quarterly magazine, *Threshold: Exploring the Future of Education.* The issue focuses on the problem of teacher retention and includes articles that examine the root causes of America's "teacher shortage," what it takes to build a strong professional community that engages teachers, and an introduction co-authored by NEA President Reg Weaver and CIC's Peggy O'Brien. View the issue online at www.ciconline.org/aboutcic/publications/threshold.htm. Print subscriptions cost $9.99 and can be ordered through the *Threshold* site.

Free Shakespeare Kits

The National Endowment for the Arts, as part of the Shakespeare in American Communities program, will provide 25,000 high school teachers with print, audio, and video resources to assist in teaching Shakespeare. The kit includes such items as a *Shakespeare for All Time* video, *Teacher's Guide to Shakespeare's Life and Times,* and a *Teaching Shakespeare* audio CD. To order the Shakespeare in American Communities kit or to download materials, visit www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org.

Banking Basics

Give students, from fourth grade to adult, money management skills with financial literacy lessons from Wells Fargo Bank. Educators can call 866-650-6228 to order the free CD-ROM "Hands on Banking/El futuro en tus manos," which contains commercial-free banking and financial management information and activities grouped by grade level and available in English and Spanish. The lessons meet national standards in math, literacy, and economics, and the program can be run on either a Windows-compatible or Macintosh computer. Accompanying teacher's guides, as well as the lessons

Take Note *continues on next page*

Make a Difference!

THE NEA FUND

For Children & Public Education

The Political Action Committee of the National Education Association

It's been said that if you think like a hammer, you view every problem as a nail. Well, two years after the so-called No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act was signed into law, it's become clear to many that the law is an industrial-sized hammer aimed squarely at public school employees and students.

The law's many problems have driven legislators in 25 states to pass or consider resolutions or bills calling on Congress to amend it or fully fund its mandates. Parents, teachers, other school employees, superintendents, and school board members are speaking out, too. In recent weeks, 3,000 turned out at a funding rally at the Florida state Capitol, 4,000 rallied in Arizona, and another 10,000 rallied in Maryland.

Want to get on board?

Make a contribution to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Education. The Fund supports candidates for federal office who share NEA's dissatisfaction with the so-called NCLB. You can contribute online at www.neafund.org.

Write a letter to your newspaper and your state and congressional representatives, and vote for candidates who support public schools. Go to www.nea.org/lac.

Volunteer for your Association's political action program.

And **vote**, as if your job depended on it.

DIVERSITY CALENDAR

MAY

MAY 1–31—ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The month to celebrate the collective accomplishments of Asian Pacific Americans, who include many ethnic groups with diverse histories, languages, and cultures. For more, see www.infoplease.com/spot/asianhistory1.html.

MAY 1–31—BETTER HEARING AND SPEECH MONTH

A month to raise awareness about how to identify, prevent, and treat speech, language, and hearing disorders. Sponsored by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. For more, go to www.asha.org.

MAY 1—DÍA DEL TRABAJO

Mexico celebrates its labor day on this date, as do many other countries, including Venezuela, Brazil, and Costa Rica.

JUNE

JUNE 13—RACE UNITY DAY

Sponsored by followers of the Bahá'í faith, this day promotes racial harmony and understanding and always takes place the second Sunday in June.

JUNE 15—MAGNA CARTA DAY

On this day in 1215, King John signed the Magna Carta, which became known as the first charter of English Liberties. For more, visit www.bl.uk/collections/treasures/magna.html.

JUNE 19—JUNETEENTH

This day commemorates the emancipation of slaves in Texas by General Gordon Granger in 1865. Their emancipation came two-and-a-half years after slavery ended in other areas of the South.

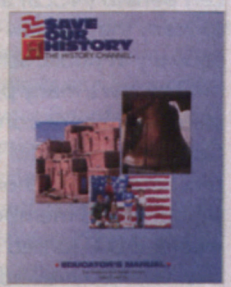
Take Note *continued*

themselves, can be found online at www.handsonbanking.com or www.elfuturoentusmanos.com.

Building Media Literacy

The Center for Media Literacy has created a MediaLit Kit for educators interested in helping students conquer media culture. Built around "five key questions" to use when evaluating media messages, such as determining the motive, content, or sender of the message, the kit also includes a collection of free handouts in PDF format, a free 25-page orientation guide for educators, and a series of eight laminated color classroom posters available for purchase. The MediaLit Kit can be downloaded at www.medialit.org.

Save Our History



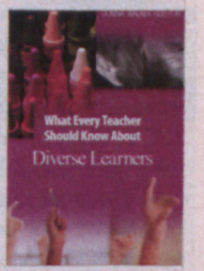
The History Channel introduces Save Our History, its program to encourage local historical preservation. The program includes a free manual with a curriculum and activities for students in grades 2–12 relating to preserving historical landmarks and documenting oral history, among other projects. Anyone who participates in a Save Our History activity can receive a patch and a certificate from The History Channel. To download the manual in PDF format or request a printed copy, go to www.saveourhistory.com.

Stopping Gun Violence

Coaches Against Gun Violence, a nationwide public education campaign of the Alliance for Justice, encourages high school coaches, athletic directors, principals, and educators from around the country to dedicate one game a season to the prevention of gun violence. To help with planning, Coaches Against Gun Violence has published a step-by-step organizing manual, *Coach's Playbook: A Guide to Organizing a Game Dedication*, to walk coaches through the steps in organizing a game dedication. Contact the Coaches Against Gun Violence staff at 866-347-7866 or coaches@afj.org for more information or visit http://CoachesAgainstGunViolence.org.

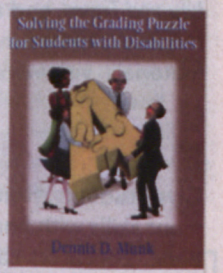
In Print

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



Living up to its ambitious title—*What Every Teacher Should Know*—this 10-volume set offers a concise, practical training curriculum for teachers, especially those seeking certification or re-certification. Each of the paperback books tackles a different topic, such as diverse learners, classroom management, student assessment, the profession and teaching politics, etc., and includes assessment pre- and post-tests, resources, and content for urban learners. Donna Walker Tileson, a 27-year veteran teacher, wrote the set. $149.95 for the set, $18.95 per volume from Corwin Press. To order, go to www.corwinpress.com.

GRADING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



Solving the Grading Puzzle for Students with Disabilities is a much-needed assessment on how to determine the grades of students facing challenges. In this groundbreaking work, Dennis Munk evaluates the psychological, ethical, and practical complexities about grades. With numerous case studies and reproducible grading adaptation tools, this book equips readers with the skills necessary to render accurate, effective, and meaningful grading systems to students with disabilities. 191 pp. $34.95 from Knowledge by Design, Inc. To order, go to www.amazon.com.

ASSESSING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

A useful manual for general education teachers struggling with how to assess special education students, *Classroom Assessment for Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Settings* considers the whole child and provides a comprehensive guide to authentic, pragmatic assessment, as well as IEP planning and programming. The book covers a wide range

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Although the school year is drawing to a close, summer is always a busy time for educators—many of whom will take courses either for certification purposes or to earn a graduate degree. As an exclusive benefit of NEA membership, OWL.org has partnered with two nationally recognized professional development providers—Canter & Associates and Pearson SkyLight—to offer online courses at discounted prices. Through Canter & Associates, NEA members can save 15 percent on a wide variety of online courses including English Language Development and Classroom Management and Instruction. In addition, Canter will waive the application fee for NEA members who enroll in one of their master's degree programs. Pearson SkyLight offers a host of video and online courses at a discount for NEA members, including Coaching and Mentoring and Assessment. Through a partnership with Drake and Concordia Universities, Pearson also offers both individual courses and advanced degrees at a discount for members.

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of informal methods of evaluation, including how to develop, administer, score, interpret, and match results to the curriculum. Written in a user-friendly format by Cathleen G. Spinelli, this resource links theory to practice with real-life examples and gives detailed explanations regarding how, when, and why to assess. It is accompanied by an Instructor's Manual. 588 pp. $65 from Prentice Hall. To order, go to www.prenhall.com.

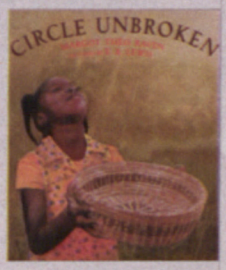
HELP KIDS FEEL SAFE

With the war in Iraq, the September 11 attacks, and Anthrax scares, students may be left feeling anxious. *Feeling Safe, Talking to Children About War and Terrorism,* is a *Child Magazine* guide for parents to help their children cope with frightening current events. Educators will also find the easy to read question and answer format helpful for their classrooms. Read how children in war torn countries keep peace of mind while the world around them is falling apart. 128 pp. $7.95 from Barnes & Noble Books. To order, call or visit www.bn.com.

PRAYER FOR RAIN

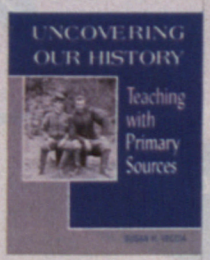
Written for ages 4–8, with bold and colorful art, Jeanette Winter's *Elsina's Clouds* tells how a young girl follows the traditions of her Southern African heritage. For generations Basotho women have decorated the walls of their houses as a prayer for rain, and now it's Elsina's turn to paint her first house and wait for the ancestors to hear her request. 40 pp. $16 from Frances Foster Books. To order, call 888-330-8477.

MAKING BASKETS



Circle Unbroken by Margot Theis Raven portrays how the tradition of making sweetgrass baskets unites a family's past, present, and future. A grandmother shares the history of basket-making with her granddaughter, telling her the role this art form has played in the lives of their ancestors and the role it will play for the girl now that this wisdom has been imparted. 48 pp. $16 from Melanie Kroupa Books. To order, call 888-330-8477.

HISTORY WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

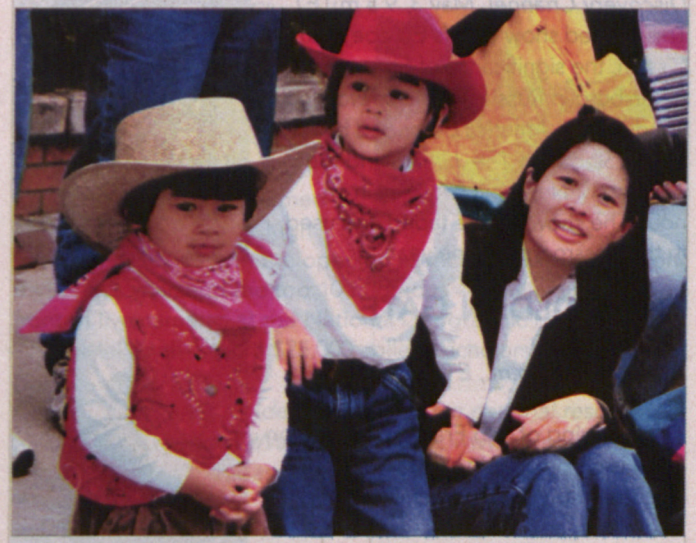


Uncovering Our History: Teaching with Primary Sources offers practical ways to use a more direct method of teaching history. Author Susan H. Veccia introduces the Library of Congress's American Memory Web site and explains how teachers can navigate the information to learn when, where, and how to incorporate these online primary documents into their curriculum. 143 pp. $35 from The American Library Association. To order, call 866-746-7252 or visit www.alastore.ala.org.

On TV

SEARCHING FOR ASIAN AMERICA

PBS, May 5, 10 p.m., ET, check local listings.



This groundbreaking television series brings fresh and contemporary Asian-American stories to U.S. audiences in a 90-minute special. A co-production of NAATA (National Asian American Telecommunications Association, www.naatanet.org) and PBS affiliate KVIE (Sacramento), the series explores the lives of four very different individuals: Gary Locke, the Chinese-American governor of the state of Washington; Martin Bautista and Jeffrey Lim, Filipino physicians living in rural Oklahoma, and Lela Lee, a young Korean-American actress and the creator of the popular Web comic "Angry Little Girls." Through the details of their lives, the program examines the larger universal issues of identity, family, work, citizenship, and community. Educators can find accompanying classroom materials at www.pbs.org/searching.

IN THE MIX: IRAQ UNPLUGGED

PBS, May 1, check local listings for times.

Witness a second videoconference exchange between a group of Iraqi teens from Baghdad and their peers from a Connecticut school just weeks after the Bush Administration declared an end to major combat in Iraq. This episode of *In the Mix* offers a unique insight on post-Saddam Iraq through the eyes of the teens who lived through the war. They openly talk about their experiences, their attitudes about the U.S. role, and their hopes for the future.

WORLD ODYSSEYS

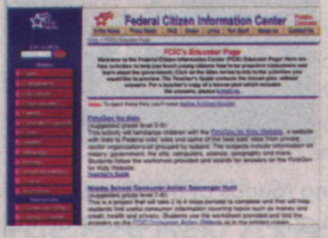
TRAVEL, May 2 and 3, 2:30 a.m., ET.

Explore New Zealand—a land of lush green pastures, active volcanoes, and geysers—in this 30-minute episode of the series that travels to different locations

RIGHT COLUMN, PHOTO TOP: MARTIN BAUTISTA; BOTTOM: CHRIS MCLENNAN/DCI

On The Web

CONSUMER INFO FOR STUDENTS



A quick stop to www.pueblo.gsa.gov/educators.htm provides several classroom activities that the Federal Citizen Information Center (FCIC) has put together to introduce students to the wealth of consumer information available on the Web. For example, The Consumer Scavenger Hunt sends middle school students on a hunt for basic consumer information, while The Car Chase Scene tunes high school students in to the true cost of owning a car. Teachers can also use the FCIC's information to create activities tailored to their students.

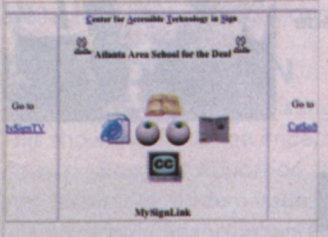
BOOKPALS

Performing Artists for Literacy in Schools (PALS), a program of the Screen Actors Guild Foundation brings us BookPALS, a collection of digital videos available via an online streaming digital program that feature well-known actors reading popular children's books. Readers include former Senator and Presidential candidate Al Gore and *The Lord of The Rings'* Elijah Wood.

Additional activities and lesson plans accompany each 10-minute video. Go to www.bookpals.net/storyline.

SIGN LANGUAGE TUTOR

Learning sign language has become easier with a new online database. MySignLink, www.aasdweb.com/mysignlink, is a searchable online sign language dictionary with more than 17,000 English words. Developed by AASD Media/Technology, the program links words to nearly 2,500 video clips showing signs in action. Just type in a word, click ok, and watch a short video of the corresponding sign.



TEST YOUR NEWS KNOWLEDGE

Newsmania is an interactive news game for kids ages 5–14. Students may test their knowledge of current events,

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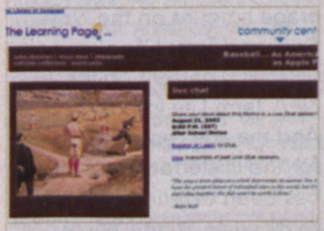
headlines in history, sports, and entertainment through three levels of difficulty. When they score 70 points or higher, they are awarded an all-access "Press Pass" that can be printed from the Web. To play, go to www.newseum.org/newsmania.

AN AMERICAN TRADITION



Baseball: As American as Apple Pie is an annotated collection of Library of Congress resources about America's pastime. The site includes early baseball pictures, baseball songs and stories, baseball cards, online lesson plans for high school students, and letters by Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play major league baseball. Go to http://memory.loc.gov/learn/community/cc_baseball.php.

FBI YOUTH

Invite students to take the "special agent challenge" at FBI Youth's site, www.fbi.gov/kids/6th12th/6th12th.htm. Through the site, they can spend a day in the life of an FBI employee, follow a case through the FBI lab, learn about investigations throughout the world, and read up on FBI history.

ONLINE SCIENCE-ATHON

This site invites elementary and middle-grade students to discover the science in their daily lives. Presented as various challenges, the science-athon asks students to investigate their world in ways that are engaging and easy for educators to incorporate into their teaching. Each activity generates class data that are submitted to a central database, and questions are produced from the student-generated information. Go to http://scithon.terc.edu/.

BUG YOUR STUDENTS

Students can learn about common household pests and how to prevent them from entering their homes by logging on to PestWorld for Kids, www.PestWorldForKids.org. Created by the National Pest Management Association, the site gives information on pest behavior via interactive learning games and lesson plans for grades K–5.

Read with a Hero

Looking for another way to connect your school with community members and provide students an opportunity to share reading with adults? Participate in the "Read With a Hero" program.

The "Read With a Hero" program was created by teachers in Lafayette, Indiana, to honor the memory of the heroes who lost their lives, as well as those who came to the aid of thousands on and after September 11, 2001.

Now an annual event held on September 11, "Read With a Hero" honors the local heroes that are a part of every community (including police officers, EMTs, firefighters, military personnel, veterans, and others) by inviting them to read to students in classrooms. Local heroes can share stories about bravery and courage with students in your school and can also demonstrate to schoolchildren that courage and bravery comes in many forms and many walks of life.

Mark your calendars now for Read With a Hero Day.

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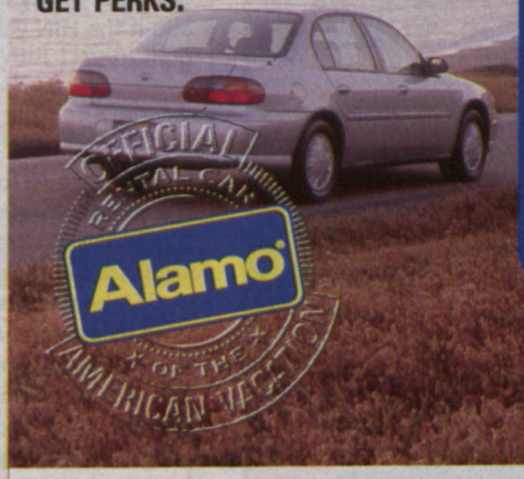

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What's Up at HIN

HIV/AIDS IS STILL AT WORK

With more people living and working with HIV, the workplace is aggressively addressing discrimination, return-to-work, and employee morale issues associated with the disease. To help, HIN, along with the CDC-sponsored Business and Labor Responds to AIDS Initiative, has developed a Web site where you will find information and tools to assist you in making your workplace a safe and productive environment for everyone. Check out www.hivatwork.com or www.neahin.org/programs/reproductive/index.htm#hivaids for more information.

NEA SCORES A WIN FOR GUN SAFETY!

NEA and HIN scored a victory for school and community safety in March after collaborating with police chiefs, sheriffs, hunters, PTA leaders, and educators to support measures that fight gun crime. In the groundbreaking win, the U.S. Senate approved amendments to renew the assault weapons ban and make gun show sales safer before the underlying bill was defeated. The assault weapons ban, prohibiting the manufacture of specific military style, semi-automatic guns, will expire in September unless Congress takes further action. The amendment to close the gun show loophole would require unlicensed sellers at gun shows to make the same safety checks as licensed sellers. To learn more about the HIN Gun Safety Project, visit www.neahin.org/gunsafety.

STATE ASSOCIATION CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM TRAINING

Is your state Association ready to assist members who experience a traumatic event? The California Teachers Association will host a training for Association staff from any state interested in serving on a Crisis Response Team, May 11–14, at CTA headquarters in Burlingame. Training will be delivered by experienced staff from HIN and other state Associations and Marleen Wong, M.S.W., whom the Wall Street Journal identified as one of the "architects" of school safety programs. For more information, visit www.neahin.org/programs/schoolsafety/beprepared/coping/programs.htm.

SHARE YOUR STORY IN *RA TODAY!*

Are you a 2004 RA delegate with an interesting or inspirational story around an important health issue? If so, HIN wants to share it in an issue of *RA Today!* Stories around health issues such as indoor air quality, bullying and harassment, mental health, cancer, physical activity/nutrition, sexual health, or crisis response are welcomed. If you would like to participate or know of someone that may be interested, please contact Kristy Grammer at 202-822-7729 or kgrammer@nea.org on or before May 14.

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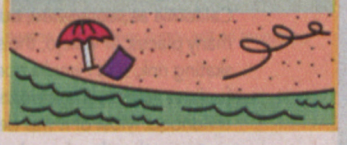
In the meantime, check out NEA Today's Web site for new member prices and promotions.



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Brown and Me

How the Supreme Court shaped my life.

BY TERRY JONES

My earliest memories of *Brown v. Board of Education* are through the eyes of my parents. They were born and raised in the rural South. They told us children about Jim Crow laws in Mississippi, the ruthlessness of whites, and how strong Black people were to be able to withstand such hatred and brutality. They wanted us to know that as oppressive as the segregated South was, the humanity of Black people persisted and the Black story was able to survive.

My parents lived lives of total segregation from birth to adulthood, when they escaped to California in search of a better life. In California, their children could get the education they were denied. I remember them telling me how important it was to get an education, because education was my ticket to ride and nobody could take it away from me.

I remember my parents' pride and happiness over the *Brown* decision and what happened afterwards. They had relatives in Jackson, Mississippi, who were threatened, had houses bombed, and lost jobs because they were active in demanding equal pay for Black teachers and in pushing for school integration. Just hearing these stories excited and inspired me.

But they also talked about the ironies of integration—Black teachers losing jobs when schools were integrated, Black kids going to white schools, but no white kids coming to Black schools or Black teachers going to white schools.

My parents had little formal education. My father often told me he completed the second grade, and when my mother heard him, she would jokingly say, "Quit bragging." Nonetheless, he was an avid reader, active in his union, and along with my mother, a member of the NAACP.

Our house was a gathering place for friends, union buddies, and meetings of all kinds, especially on Friday nights.

Because the house was so small, there was no separate place for the kids, so we would hear all the discussions about injustice and labor and Black people sticking together. From these gatherings, I came away with the feeling that to be somebody good, you had to be involved in protests and try to make things better.

Brown v. Board did not just impact the South. I remember when the NAACP boycotted a local store in our hometown, Vallejo, California—the first organized protest I would join—while I was still in high school. Most people do not think of California as segregated, but it was and it still is in many places. In Vallejo, the swimming pool, skating rink, and I would guess many other facilities were segregated through much of my childhood. Most of it was de facto—a matter of custom rather than law—but it was just as real and just as hurtful. *Brown v. Board* and the sit-ins and freedom rides that followed gave us a sense of urgency to do something about our own segregation. There were marches, protests, and threats of legal action.

Terry Jones with some of his students on the campus of California State University at Hayward.

The reaction was not nearly as hostile as in the South, and our protests opened up our segregated city. I am still proud that I played a part in pressuring the city to hire more Black police officers and teachers, and paving the way for a more open community.

After college, I came back to Vallejo to work with delinquent youth, and helped organize more protests against injustice. I vividly remember thinking, "This is my hometown and I'm a college graduate and I am going to put what I learned in college to use here." *Brown* set the stage for all that—*Brown*, and my parents.

I am a walking, living example of the benefits of *Brown v. Board*, the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, and affirmative action. I stand on the shoulders of the giants of the struggle, and on the dreams, the aspirations, and the courage of my parents and their friends. Without them, I would probably not have been admitted to the University of California graduate school where I earned my Ph.D. I doubt that I would have been selected for a tenure track position at the University of Pennsylvania, or for my current position at California State University at Hayward, where I have served for more than 30 years. *Brown v. Board*, the civil rights struggles that followed, and affirmative action cracked the door for me and countless others, but I walked through the door and performed and, I believe, have brought added value to every institution in which I have worked. That's why I have fought and will keep fighting for affirmative action in California.

Brown v. Board was the launch pad for the civil rights struggle in America and beyond, the end of apartheid in South Africa, the Tiananmen Square student revolt in China, an inspiration for freedom-loving people around the world. And it has been like a rock to me, a foundation that has affected all my life. I thank the 1954 Supreme Court for that.

And I'm grateful for growing up in a house that was so small, I could hear my parents talking.

Terry Jones is professor of sociology and social services at California State University, Hayward, and former president of the NEA-affiliated California Faculty Association.

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